NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

A GRIMM FAIRY TALE
Paint a captivating story with artist Min Yum

Andreas Bennwik explains his poster art process inside!

EXCLUSIVE

JULIE DILLON INTERVIEW
On Hugo Awards and her life-changing moments

Classic Fantasy FILM ART
Rediscover the best film posters of all time, and **start painting your own!**

HOW TO PHOTOBASH A STUNNING VEHICLE
USE 3D TO CREATE A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT
JAMES GURNEY PAINTS FANTASY ART OUTDOORS

Future

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Welcome...
to a special issue

I've wanted to get David Bowie as Jareth the Goblin King on the cover for years – the ImagineFX team has long had a tradition of bunging on the Labyrinth soundtrack when things get crazy around deadline. I mean, how can you feel stressed or peeved when you're listening to Magic Dance?!

Anyway, we commissioned Andreas Bennwik to create a fantasy art poster homage cover (page 66) long before Bowie's death was announced on 11 January. Many of you will have a soft spot for those 1980s fantasy films – some featured on the cover, even more in the big poster art feature on page 40 – which boasted a magical mix of adventurous storylines, inventive puppetry, stunning set designs and evocative poster art. Bowie's Goblin King character takes his place at the top of the lot, and I'm just sad that it's become more than a fun cover to work on, but our very own tribute to the late, great artist.

This issue sees us reuniting with an old friend of the magazine, Min Yum, as he takes on a lesser-known Brothers Grimm fairy tale and creates a memorable, melancholic illustration – head over to page 70 for that. There's also a cracking workshop on populating your own role-playing game with engaging, unique characters from artist Simon Dubuc on page 76.

There's loads more to explore, but I highly advise you do so with the Labyrinth soundtrack blaring away! Enjoy the issue.

Beren

Beren Neale, Acting Editor
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Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

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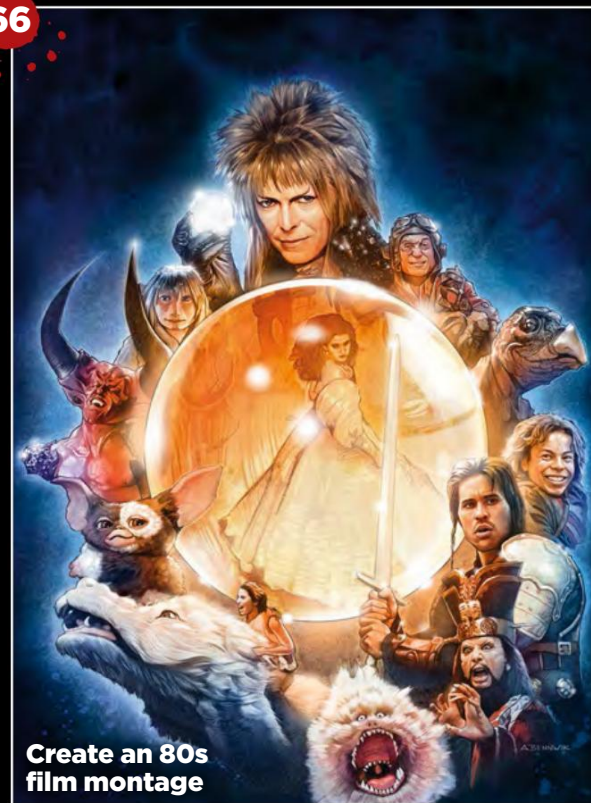
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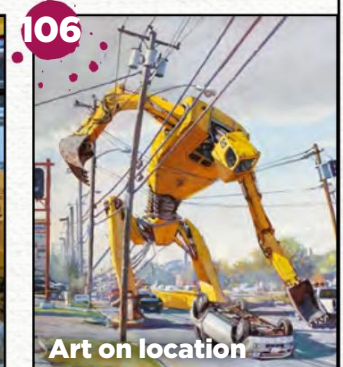
Colour thumbnailing

ImagineFX Resources
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at **http://ifxm.ag/ifx-bowie**

OVER 3 HOURS of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

WORKSHOP

Paint art on location

James Gurney heads outdoors and uses casein paint to create a giant robot trampling through suburbia

GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

1 Go to the website
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):
http://ifxm.ag/ifx-bowie

2 Find the files you want
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.

3 Download what you need
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

Marcel van Vuuren

Watch the artist's top tips for photobashing, and painterly techniques, to create a speeding ground vehicle concept that has a realistic look and feel.
Plus WIPs and final image

Mark Molnar

Imply what's about to happen rather than showing it, to create drama in a painting.
Plus WIPs and final image
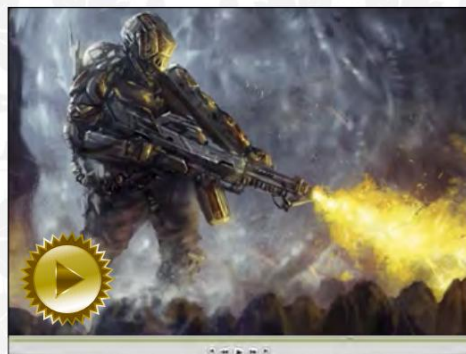
Mark Molnar

How to use the right lighting and level of detail in a flamethrower action scene.
Plus WIPs and final image

Tom Foster

Learn to give your comic art a bold colour scheme that will catch the viewer's eye.
Plus WIPs and final image

Marcel van Vuuren

Think of the bigger picture to design a sleek airlock on an advanced spaceship.
Plus WIPs and final image
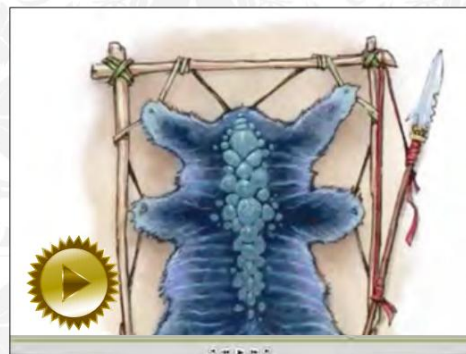
Dave Brasgalla

Consider which parts of an image should be familiar, to paint an animal pelt.
Plus WIPs and final image

TRAINING
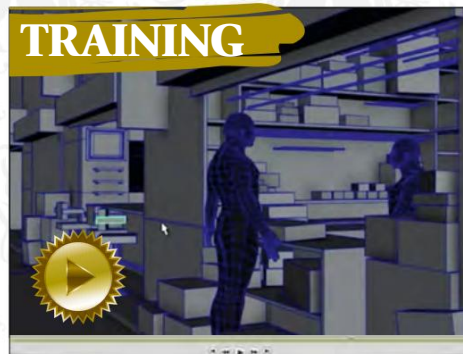
Devon Fay

The environment artist shows what it takes to craft a Star Wars-style city scene, in Creating a Sci-Fi Alleyway.

COREL PARTICLESHOP

ParticleShop is bringing Corel brush technology to users of Photoshop. We demonstrate exactly what the plug-in is capable of.
Visit http://ifxm.ag/PrSp

AND ALL THIS! WIPs and finished art available to download, by professional artists including Andreas Bennwik, David Brasgalla, Pablo Carpio and Charlotte Creber.

31 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

PAINT
Andreas Bennwik likes to use this one for adding slightly larger highlights.

CLOUD
The brush Pablo Carpio uses to make fog, clouds and atmospheric effects.

WATER
Min Yum uses this brush to create water texture, ripple effects and reflections.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Kathryn Steele

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MEDIA: Paint Tool SAI, Photoshop

A freelance artist based in America's Midwest, Kathryn has a master's degree in media arts and science, and tends to focus on character design and illustration.

"I love trying new things in my work," she says, "and studying other artists to find out what works with my style." Stories drive Kathryn's work and she's inspired by mythology and her favourite artists: Charlie Bowater, Miles Johnston and Jana Schirmer.

"To me, the most important thing to designing a great character is to give them purpose," she says.

1 PERSEPHONE "Persephone is Queen of the Underworld. I wanted to figure out what would make Hades become obsessed. The eyes have long been considered the gateway to the soul and it could not be truer. A woman who can make a man bend at a single glance is a woman who man desires."

2 THEIA "Theia was the Titan goddess of sight and shining light of the clear blue sky. She was also the one who endowed gold, silver and gems with their brilliance and intrinsic value. This piece was heavily inspired by one of my favourite artists, Charlie Bowater, mimicking her amazing pieces of greyscale with gold accents."

2

Artist crit

Winona Nelson sees lots of promise here

"These pieces show Kathryn's great sensitivity to emotion. The sense of mystery pulls me in. Just a little more time spent on details such as the treatment of surfaces will seal the deal."

Aimé Salamin

LOCATION: Switzerland
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MEDIA: Photoshop

Twenty-two-year-old freelance illustrator Aimé discovered Photoshop and digital drawing at art school. "My first steps in digital painting weren't easy," he says. "I didn't want to become a digital artist at first. I wanted to draw with classical mediums." But his view changed. "Step by step I was seduced by the visual possibilities of Photoshop," he says.

Aimé counts Japanese media – manga and martial art films in particular – as an influence. "Even though it's not my culture, I feel an attachment to this universe," he says.

1 SAMURI "I wanted to do a battle scene with samurais. I really like Japanese movies and everything that comes from this land. I wanted to do something realistic, with the feeling of a wave crashing against an opponent."

2 RUN RUN RUN "I was keen to create a spaceship race contest that takes place within a post-apocalyptic universe. It was crucial that I emphasised the scene's sense of speed."

3 TUDÙ "This is for a mobile video game project called Opticale and the creature is a Tudù, inspired by a bird and squirrel. My goal was to represent it in a natural environment."

4 FUTURE'S SONS "I wanted to create illustrations of kids living in a future completely destroyed by machine wars, with these children having to survive in a giant grave of robots."

© Opticale, Funrikazan

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"What strikes me first about Aimé's art is his expert lighting choices and clarity of colours. This makes his images look bold and crisp – and they pop! He clearly has a sense of humour, too."
Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

🇺🇸 **Angela Sasser**

LOCATION: US
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MEDIA: Photoshop

An artist who's dabbled in writing and mask-making over the years, Angela has authored an art instruction book on mixed media techniques and is an avid collector of global stories and histories.

"I'm drawn to subjects that combine beauty with an edge of darkness," she says. "I want to create the kind of imagery that stays in the backs of your eyelids long after you're done looking and reveals the facets of humanity's imagination and morality."

1 ENCHAINED WIND "A tribute piece I created for a good friend of mine. I channelled her love of masks and whimsical subjects to tell a small story through this unnamed character."

2 OATHBOUND "Upon this dagger, he swore an oath to protect the land and its people. Now, he must do so once more without fear! This image was inspired by an original world I'm exploring in art and words."

3 THE KEEPER OF SECRETS "To worship at her temple is to unlock the sins within and be cleansed. Be cautious of what secrets you keep from her, for she will know all in due time. The kept secret will rebound upon its owner threefold!"
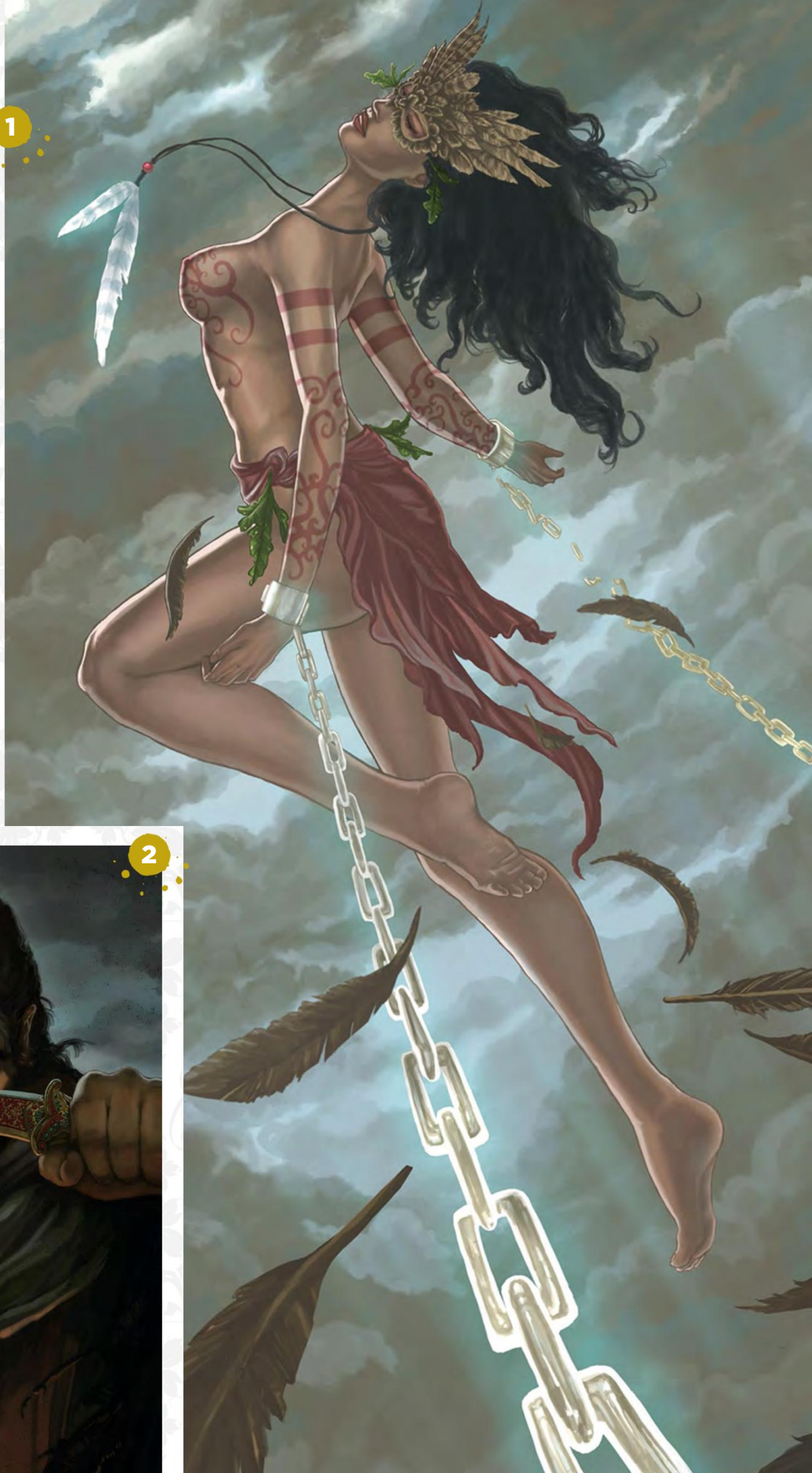
IMAGINEFX CRIT

"I like Angela's undercurrent of freedom and femininity in her art – albeit there's less in the intense Oathbound. She certainly knows a thing or two about creating an atmosphere."
Beren Neale,
Acting Editor

Reader
FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

🇺🇸 **Nichole Balsley**
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MEDIA: Photoshop, SketchBook, Illustrator, Softimage

"We encounter art every day. It's the creation of something new or beautiful that it keeps me passionate about my work," says Nichole. "As Albert Einstein said, creativity is intelligence having fun."

Her early inspiration came from writing to Disney with a sketch of Ariel when she was young and in return receiving a book on how to draw its concept characters.

"My other big inspiration is Leonardo da Vinci," she says. "His curiosity in life and mechanics helped him create some of the most wonderful engineering marvels of his time and ours."

1 MIDNIGHT DREARY "I was inspired to create a piece dedicated to one of my favourite storytellers and poets, Edgar Allan Poe. His work keeps you on the edge, is full of suspense and otherworldly oddness. I incorporated two of his most popular poems: The Raven, and The Pit and the Pendulum."

2 WAKE UP MY SWEETHEARTS "I wanted to create a dragon in a way it may not have been done before. The idea is that, when a certain bell is rung by the village, the dragons will be born out of statues that mark the castle walls, and protect the city."

3 VRACE "I decided to create my own League of Legends character to practise painting armour. I used MMA fighter Wilson Reis as a basis and incorporated a little Brazilian and Japanese design. I wanted the colours of the clothing to reflect Japanese men's kimonos and some contrasting Brazilian flare with the feathers."
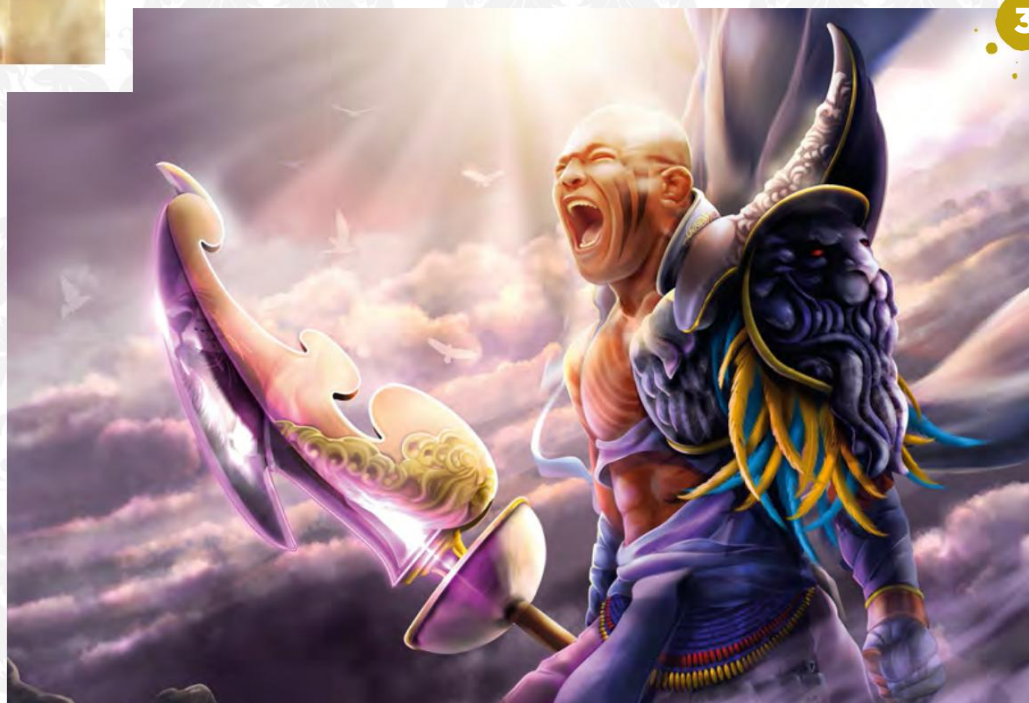
1

🇨🇦 **Russell Jones**
LOCATION: Canada
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MEDIA: Photoshop

Freelance artist Russell began taking art seriously in 2012. "I found the Crimson Daggers art group," he says. "Their dedication was incredibly inspiring. I started a forum sketchbook and began studying every day.

"Since then art has become a major element of my life," reveals Russell. "Looking back at how far you have come can be a huge boost. Building a skill for yourself is incredibly rewarding."

1 ALISHA12287 "I spent two weeks on this to surprise a girl I'm fond of. I wasn't sure what I could do to impress her. She got it printed and framed."

2 A WARNING "Knights are cool, but I'll choose a brutish barbarian any day. I went with a bit of a Frazetta fantasy lighting scenario here."

🇺🇸 Martin Lutz

LOCATION: US
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MEDIA: Photoshop, Maya

"I'm an artist today because I played too much Baldur's Gate and StarCraft as a kid and a light clicked on in my head when I realised that someone drew all that stuff!" says Martin. "These epic stories and awesome characters were way more interesting than school."

His work also combines his love of old-school painting, taking inspiration from artists such as Sargent, Zorn and Wyeth. Martin also paints plein air with gouache and casein, and even though he doesn't generally do professional traditional work, he's learned a lot about colour and composition from it.

"Often I'll generate a palette to sample colours from in Photoshop," he says, "similar to how I'd lay out a limited palette for traditional painting."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"I love the sense of foreboding in The Bull Tower and how its meaning is left with the viewer. Is it the End of Days, or just a bit of rough weather? I want to know more about the Bull Tower corporation too…"
Clifford Hope,
Operations Editor

1 THE BULL TOWER "I was thinking about overgrown industrial cities and about big, dynastic corporations. Then I drove by a refinery and realised I had an idea I wanted to work out in paint."

2 KOVAR "This guy has the craziest stories and delights in having an audience to tell them to. He's a big tough barbarian who hunts saber-tooth tigers, but he's also a lovable ham. Characters like this make any fantasy world a charming one."

3 WINDCALLER MAGE "I love playing around with the fantasy standards. This painting came from a 'Wouldn't it be cool if…' random thought. What if air mages were young and energetic instead of old and wizened, and instead of heavy wizard robes they wore loose, flowing clothing?"

4 DEFEAT "I wanted to show the aftermath of a battle from the losing side. It was a tough one. I got badly stuck while I was thumbnailing, so I mocked up the scene in 3D and played around with a camera and lights until I got something I liked."

3

4
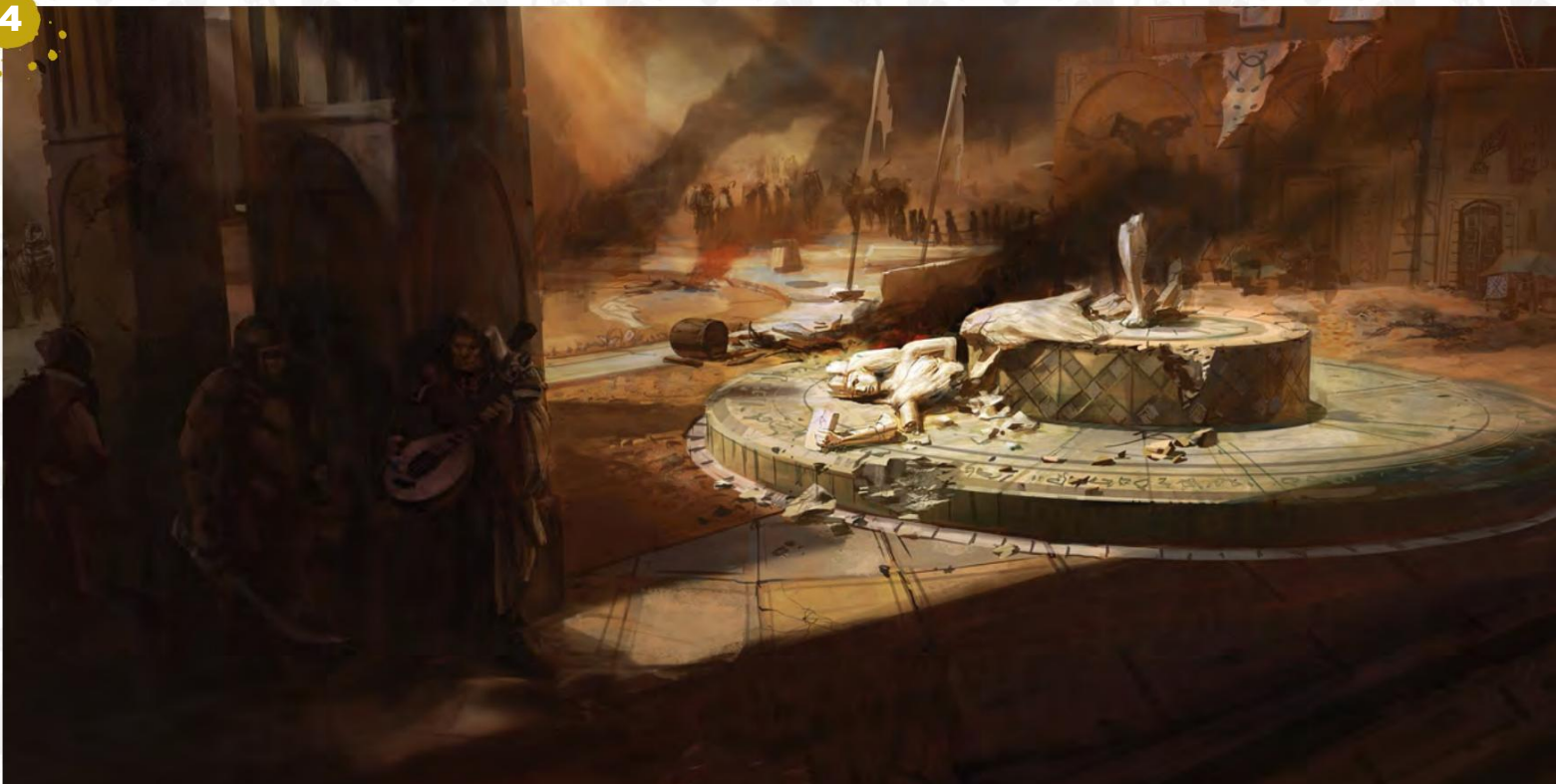
🇪🇸 Josan Gonzalez

LOCATION: Spain
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MEDIA: Photoshop and traditional media

Josan was a fashion illustrator until he decided to explore comic art. Since turning freelance he's worked for Dark Horse, Boom!, Dynamite, Games Magazine and Agat Films & Cie among others, as a comic colourist and cover artist. Early this year he released his first self-published artbook.

"In it I explore a vision of a near future plagued by technology and over the top situations," he says. "As well as complex mechanical inventions and crazy character designs." An obsession for detail and rich colour palettes have become the landmarks of his style.

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"I love Josan's comic aesthetic! And the fact he seems to enjoy depicting heroines. But it's his enviable skill for the finer details that really captures and holds my attention."
Alice Pattillo,
Staff Writer
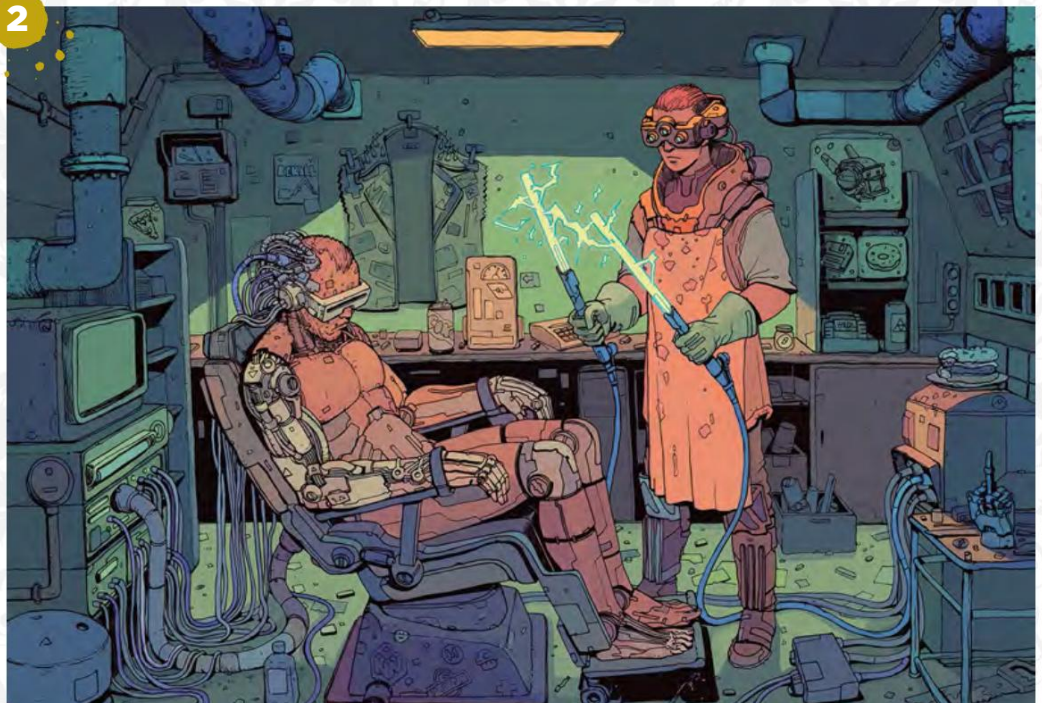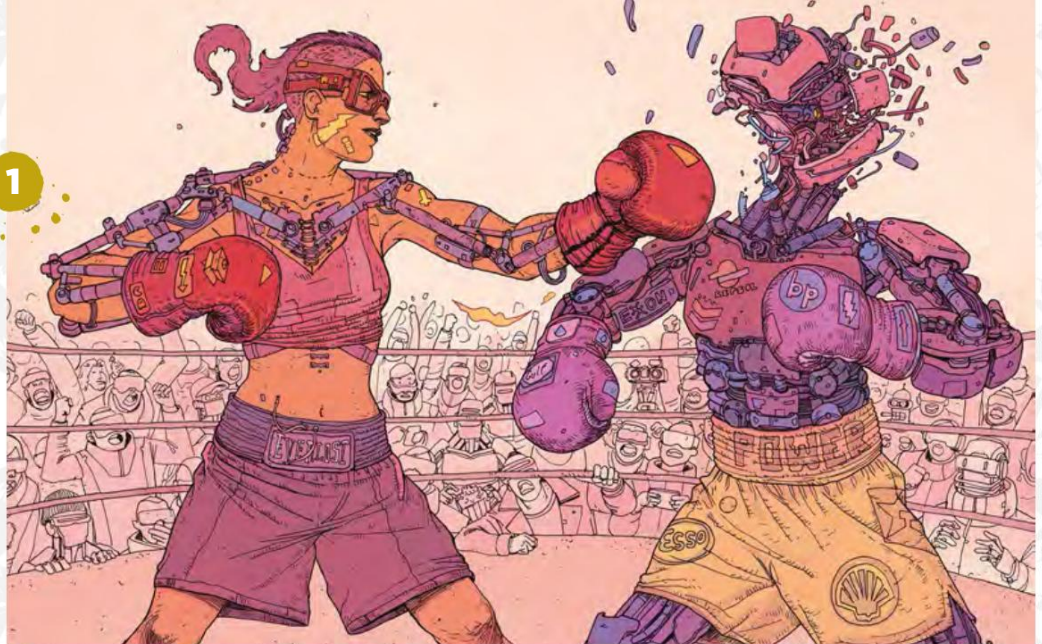
1 DEMANUFACTURE "The match of the century: can a human win against a machine? The woman gets a bit of help from an exoskeleton to even things up. Doesn't look too good so far for the corporate-sponsored fighter..."

2 FRANKENPUNK "A cyberpunk take on the Frankenstein mythos. In my retelling Doctor Frankenstein is an androgynous genius obsessed with creating life, but also blending flesh and machine to create the ultimate mutant."

3 THE FUTURE IS NOW "The deadliest and most fascinating melody ever played on the Piano-Bomb. The wrong chord can trigger the detonation sequence. The right one can elevate the listener to a new level of consciousness."

4 WARMACHINE "A thousand atom bombs of power, plus top notch engineering dedicated to destruction, and coolness."

5 VIOLET REVOLUTION "She rules the suburbs with an iron fist. Actually, four iron fists. Society betrayed her and now she will unleash hell in the name of the revolution."

Peter Mohrbacher's Gadreel. The artist believes the gigs with the highest level of exposure should also pay the best.

> ❝ Ninety nine per cent of the time, when someone brings up exposure in any offer, they don't have any to give you ❞

Because you're worth it

Cheap labour Can it pay to work for free, or do you risk undervaluing yourself? **Alice Pattillo** sees if artists are being exploited for exposure

It's common these days, to prove yourself through unpaid work. Sometimes this can mean work experience within a company, other times it can be an unpaid commission or two. It's important to be able to identify such assignments that are opportunities that can lead to employment, earnings and exposure – and when you're simply being taken advantage of.

When it comes to commissions and unpaid work, 2000 AD artist Tom Foster says, "There are three questions you should always ask yourself: who's asking, for how much, and why? The 'who' is important because that tells you how much exposure, if any, you're going to get and of what kind."

Full-time freelance artist Noah Bradley is highly sceptical of any promised exposure, "Ninety nine per cent of the time, when someone brings up exposure in any offer, they don't really have any exposure to give you." And Tom agrees, saying that if the client is respected and has a large audience, it may be worth your while, but he makes

Godless Shrine by Noah Bradley, who encourages free work but doesn't trust the promise of exposure.

Judge Dredd artist Thomas Foster believes free work can be worth your time, but you need to consider who it's for and why they aren't paying up.

the observation that such companies would rarely ask you to work for free.

Artist Peter Mohrbacher takes a stronger view, highlighting the disparity of the exposure argument. "When someone else is sharing your work for their own gain, that's when you're providing the most value to them. The highest exposure gigs should typically be the highest paying."

Peter's opinion is that in-house work experience must benefit you as much as your employer. "Whenever I hire an intern, I always make sure I'm providing more to them than they are providing me," he explains. "That's why being an intern can be so valuable, because it's the one time when you're working for someone ➡

INDUSTRY INSIGHT
LAUREN PANEPINTO

Orbit Books' art director gives the other side of the story…

Are companies underpaying their freelance artists?
Artists don't know manufacturing costs, price margins, wholesale versus consumer prices, advertising, staffing and so on. All of these factors and more go into what a company's art budgets are. Of course, I want every artist to make a fair living wage, but they might be surprised to find out that many companies can't afford to pay it.

How can artists decide whether or not a job is worth their time?
An artist needs to be aware of the quality of their work and the speed at which they work. From that that they should calculate a target hourly rate and know that if they take a job under that rate there had better be a good, non-monetary reason.

Would you ever recommend working for free?
You should always work for something – even if it's not for money. You can work for experience, for exposure, for charity, for a favour, for a relationship, for barter, for company stock, for finished product. Just make sure that something you're working for is a sure thing, not a vague promise.

How can you ensure exposure?
You should do your research on the company, look at their social media channels. You can write up a contract that guarantees publicity and social media sharing. Any freelance I do is often for friends and it's always for barter. Either their project does something I want, or they barter with leggings or whiskey. A job doesn't have to pay exclusively in money to be worthwhile, but you have to weigh it out seriously.

Lauren has been responsible for designing book covers for publishers such as Picador, Yen Press and Orbit Books.

http://ifxm.ag/lp-orbit
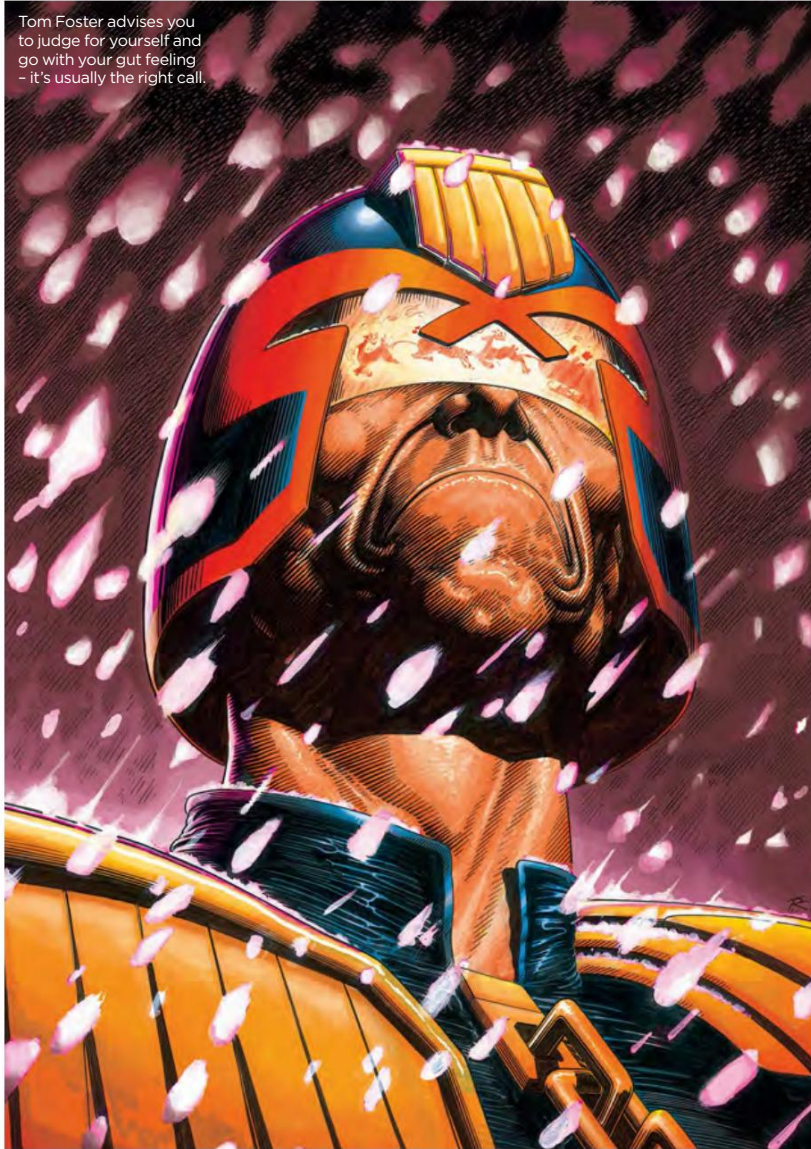
Peter Mohrbacher's Baraquiel, Angel of Lightning, which is part of the artist's Angelarium project.
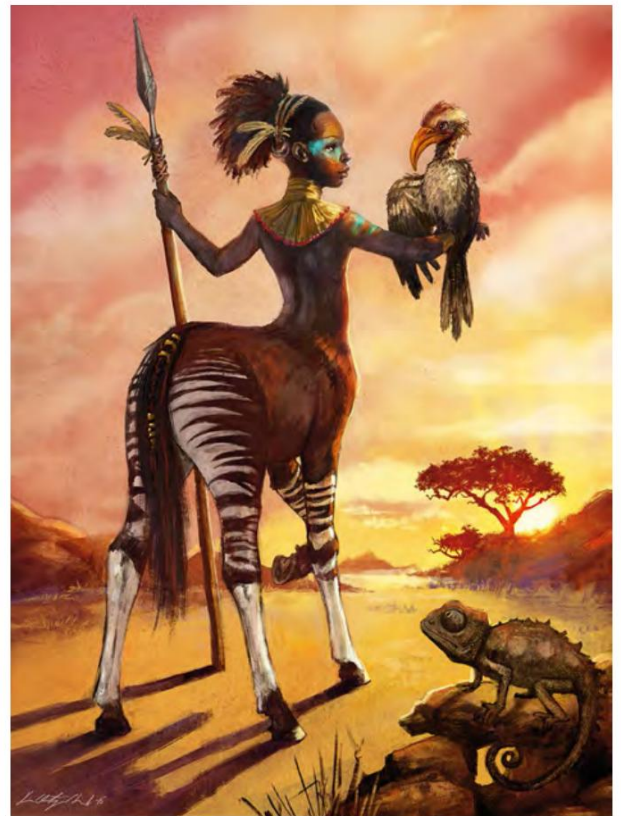
The African Unicorn by Kiri Leonard. She says that you can't predict when collaboration with other artists will pay off.

where the flow of value is reversed. With my own interns, when they start providing more value to me than I'm giving them, I hire and start paying them."

"Don't do work in exchange for nothing," says freelance illustrator and designer Angela Schmer, who believes that pay doesn't have to mean money, but it has to be something really worth your while. "You must ensure you're getting something of value, whether that's in the form of money or something else."

CONCERN OVER NOMINAL FEES

Yet sometimes even jobs with clearly defined exposure and payment can be exploitative. "The idea that being paid a nominal fee covers the lifetime value of a piece of iconic art feels generally false to me," says Peter. "It's the right fit for some people's businesses and it's necessary for some jobs, but it's too widely abused within the fantasy art industry."

Noah feels that sometimes free work can be preferable, and that many companies underpay their artists. In a recent blog by the artist, he figured that many large companies are paying $100 per commission, which would equate to a shocking $3.50/hour in earnings. He believes that the moment money enters the equation, control is no longer in your hands. Your rights to the work begin to disappear and client demands become the only thing that matters. "What was an opportunity to grow your portfolio instead becomes an exercise in enduring horrible pay," he says.

Nonetheless, Noah would never sign over any image rights without an exchange of money, and Kiri Leonard, a freelance illustrator, agrees: "I don't think it's fair to lose your rights, yet

> ## ❝ What was an opportunity to grow your portfolio instead becomes an exercise in enduring horrible pay ❞

it's common practice. I know some gaming companies have started letting the artists retain some rights - being able to sell prints, etc, and I hope to see more companies adopt that." It's certainly the template that ImagineFX has worked on since its begining.

With all the technologies and resources of the modern world, it's unnecessary to have to carry out new work for free and not maintain the rights to your images. "Exposure is better gained through posting on sites such as Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter and Instagram than by working for people for free," says Peter.

Another way of achieving this is permitting publications to use existing work rather than

Raziel, Angel of Mysteries, by Peter Mohrbacher, who says internships are far more valuable than exposure work.

Angela Schmer ensures she's getting something of value out of her commissions.
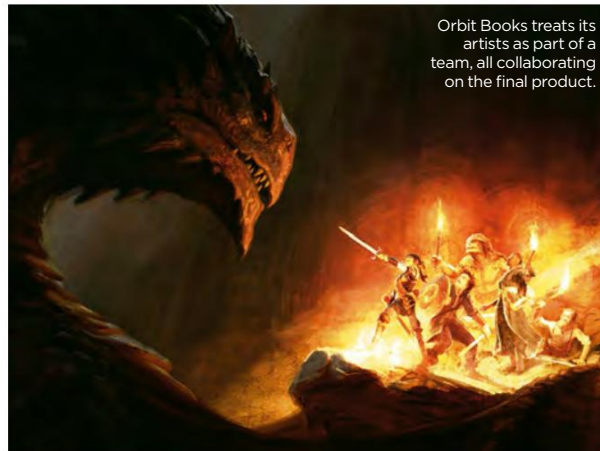
Orbit Books treats its artists as part of a team, all collaborating on the final product.

Noah Bradley favours collaboration, where you and your 'client' have mutual interests.

having to create exclusive pieces. "You're not really being asked to do anything and you might get a bit of free publicity," says Tom. "It might even increase the value of the original piece (if there is one) to buyers!"

Noah says free work can be great: "an opportunity to work with others, collaborate, grow your portfolio, and expand your skills." But he maintains it's about mutual interests and it's important to recognise the difference between collaborating with others and doing free work that you should be getting paid for. "If it's evident that the person you're working for is just too cheap to pay you, even though they're going to profit from your work, be careful," warns

Orbit Books' Lauren Panepinto says you should always work for something, even if it's not money.

Noah. But if you're teaming up with other people who are painting for the love of it, he encourages you to go for it.

CONSIDER COLLABORATION

From a comics viewpoint, collaboration is necessary. Tom says, "If a writer is trying to break into the business, has been working just as hard as you and has good material, then it might be worth a collaboration, but even then I would advise only working on a short story of up to eight pages, unless you're planning on going down the self-publishing route. This should be enough for either of you to demonstrate your core skills to potential publishers."

You can't always predict when there's going to be a pay-off when you collaborate, but just because you aren't being written a big cheque, doesn't mean you're being taken advantage of and the work won't be worth your time and efforts. "Sometimes the pay turns out to be reputation, new friends, great contacts, something that leads to a new job and more," says Kiri. She adds that it helps to do a little research on your potential collaborators. Kiri's worked for free and is likely to do it again, "I think it's important to weigh up the options and go with your gut."

Tom agrees: "Ultimately, it's your call, but if you get the impression you're being taken for a ride, you're probably right. ●

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

David Palumbo

The easel life The Philadelphia-based illustrator talks cats, camera gear and costumes as he opens his studio doors

My studio setup occupies what would normally be the dining room portion of your typical South Philadelphia row home. It's not a large space, though the high ceilings, massive mirror (came with the house, that's how they do it in South Philly) and plenty of daylight make it feel expansive.

My previous studio area was the size of the rug pictured here, so I'm happy to be able to stretch my arms out. Speaking of mirrors, the small one in that closet door (left of the tall bookshelf) is very useful for quick mirror-checks on my paintings.

Everything that I need for an average day's work is here (aside from my computer, which is in another room). Fresh brushes and tubes of paint are right next to my easel. Art books are all around, for inspiration and reference. Camera gear is sprawling out above the book shelf and boxes of props and costumes are in the closet behind my painting station. I tend to listen to music and watch movies while working, so the stereo is just two paces to the right.

I like to keep furniture simple. My easel is the same simple A-frame I've owned since college, slightly modified so it can travel in my car. My lights and work table are cheap hardware store purchases. I have a tripod for holding reference printouts.

Of course, the studio's best features are the cats, who keep me company. Roy is the tuxedo, posing with such dignity in front, while Bones (orange) and Manos (black) plot mischief in the kitchen.

David is a Spectrum- and Chesley-award-winning illustrator who's known for genre work on book covers and gaming cards. His clients include The New Yorker and Scientific American. You can see more of David's art by visiting www.dvpalumbo.com.

Photo gear is my big weakness. This is a mix of modern and vintage equipment, but almost all of it sees use.

An original Sam Weber from his Lord of the Flies collection. This was the first sizable painting I ever bought and is still one of my favourites.

I get anxiety when multiple jobs are due and I can't decide which has highest priority. So I stack open jobs as Post-it notes next to my easel and move them up and down by due date, to stay on top of my work.
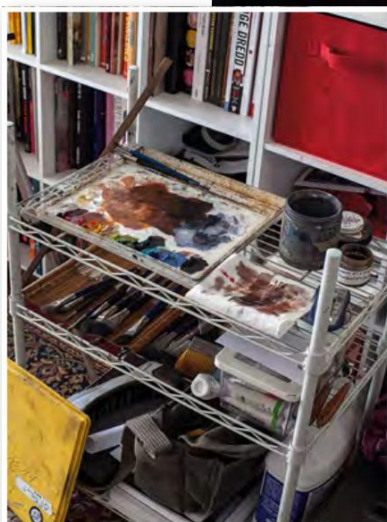
Here's my paint setup. The brushes are all Loew Cornell Golden Taklon and the palette is glass. I bought this shelf from a Home Depot for a workshop that was short of equipment, then replaced my old thrift-store night stand with it.

Soft sculpture by Dena Obaza, titled Nobody Puts Tree Trunks in the Corner. The crowns were unrelated, but I like them there.

Four years so far and we still haven't gotten to updating a single thing in that kitchen. Does it show?

I like to keep assorted skulls and bones nearby for reference. The beauty of the organic forms and seemingly fractal details are really inspiring. These are mostly from antique marts.

I've always had bad posture and used to have tension in my lower back pretty frequently, but this stool seems to help quite a bit. Also, it looks like something from Bag End.

Though I stopped collecting some years ago, I still enjoy listening and owning some of my music on vinyl. The record shelf is something I built that somehow hasn't fallen apart quite yet.

Paul couldn't resist the challenge of creating Dagda Mor, the epitome of evil and corruption.

Bringing a literary fantasy world to life

World builder To celebrate the launch of MTV's The Shannara Chronicles, Paul Gerrard has released his concept art for the series

Concept artist Paul Gerrard is sharing his art work for MTV's landmark fantasy series The Shannara Chronicles, a project he almost didn't take on.

The British artist, who's worked on Wrath of the Titans and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, says details were scarce initially and the studio wanted an in-house artist. But when director Jonathan Liebesman got in touch, Paul was sold.

"I've worked with John many times," says Paul. "I created some taster images and I was on. I read the script and was hooked!"

Based on the books by Terry Brooks, The Shannara Chronicles involved long discussions with directors, producers and writers to manage expectations. "They wanted my initial take on all the characters," he says. "So it was important not to get too bogged down in pre-existing visuals."

Paul's concept art showcases the esoteric layers of imagery he obsessively works into his designs. "Considering the sheer depth of the Shannara universe I suspect an art book will be on the cards," Paul says. "I would love to do one myself. Time will tell."

Stay up to date with Paul's concept art by visiting **www.gerrardart.com**.

Paul loves the Shannara universe, so he worked double hours on his art for the TV series.

Play as antagonist Jason Vorhees and unlock his iconic disguises, including his original 'sackhead' mask and, of course, the hockey mask.

Developing a dynamic pose for Jason in the initial concepts proved a challenge...

...but a few quick photos were enough to capture a dynamic pose for Jason for the Kickstarter campaign.

Unlucky for some

Playing dead A new Friday the 13th game promises to maintain visual accuracy to satisfy the most hardcore slasher fan

The slasher genre relies on its staples, producing many a Michael Myers or Jason Voorhees. Similarly, Friday the 13th: The Game isn't the first to come out of the franchise, yet it's looking to set a new standard for horror games.

It started out with modest intentions as Gun Studios began production on its homage to Camp Blood, called Summer Camp. Its nostalgic tribute caught the eye of producer-director-writer Sean S Cunningham, earning them the official franchise rights. "Sean helps us with making sure we are staying true to the movies," says Shane Stoneman, lead artist at IllFonic, the development studio behind the game.

Its aesthetic is grounded in the 1980s, with each playable counsellor shaped as a classic 80s film trope. "The characters were modelled a little on the archetypes in the film," says concept studio One Pixel Brush's art director, Shaddy Safadi.

"We don't have rights to the likenesses of the characters," says co-creator Wes Keltner. "But we used some as starting points." Since its successful Kickstarter campaign, the team has been busy pausing the films frame by frame to nail details. "We want to give the fans a true Friday the 13th experience, playing as both Jason and the counsellors," says Wes.

Shane has a large task on his hands, bringing art from the concept team full circle to 3D – all the while ensuring he satisfies F13's hardcore fanbase. "Pretty much everything we need for reference is right in the movies," he says.

The final game will be motion captured and horror-movie special effects legend Tom Savini is on board. "Tom is known for his practical special effects and make-up," says Wes. "That's why I wanted him." The veteran is aiding with the kill list, among other things."I'm sure fans will be pleased with what he comes up with!"

For more information on IllFonic and the game visit **www.illfonic.com**.

THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

THE PREPPY GUY

Keen-eyed F13 fans may notice that The Girl Next Door is an obvious nod to Christine 'Chris' Higgins, Friday the 13th: Part III's final girl.

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YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

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Dark fantasy

I've been a subscriber to ImagineFX for years, and some of my favourites have been the horror issues, as well as the recent one about black and white artwork. Have you got any more horror or dark fantasy issues planned?
Maxine Jones, via email

Maxine Jones is a fan of our recent black and white issues – plus any horror issues, of course!

Beren replies: Hi Maxine. I love dark fantasy too, and we've got some more coming your way soon. Plans are in place for another black and white art issue very soon, but we don't have full-on horror currently scheduled… they've never sold well, between you and me, though personally I like nothing better than a putrified cheerleader zombie giving me a big toothy grin. Ho hum. Do check out our books reviews on page 96 – there's one there that might be to your taste.

Digital beginnings

Love the magazine – it's been an essential part of each month for me over the past eight years or so. I have an artistic background – a BA (Hons) in fine art – but I don't have a clue where to begin digitally. Yes, I've bought a tablet and the software, so when I saw on the Letters page recently that you intend to introduce more sections for beginners I thought, "Finally!" So here's to a new year, new beginnings, and a new medium. Cheers!
Colm Langan, via email

Beren replies: Hey Colm. Firstly, thank you for sticking with us for eight years. It's true, plans are afoot for more entry-level content on the digital side. Procreate, ArtRage and a tablet are a great start. Have a look at Min Yum's tutorial on page 70 for some guidance on using Layers, Adjustment Layers and Photoshop's colour tools if you've got the big gun software… Off the top of my nut, issue 131, page 70, is worth checking if you're getting started in digital.

Those who are just getting started in digital may want to look at Svetlana Tigai's workshop in issue 131.

It's also worth using the video content alongside the tutorial pages to see exactly what software moves the artist is pulling off. See page 6 for more about those resources.

All about loyalty

Today, I was looking forward to renewing my subscription to ImagineFX when I noticed something kind of funny. Taking out a whole new subscription would actually be a lot cheaper than renewing my old one. Now, this confused me, since I've always assumed that magazines with a subscription option would reward their long-term readers for sticking by them for so long – this would be my second renewal – rather than punishing them with a higher rate. Don't get me wrong, I'm not looking for flowers or champagne or anything like that, but I'd at least expect the price of both options – subscribing for the first time and renewing – to be the same. Anyway, I was just wondering why there is differential pricing, because obviously there might be a perfectly good reason to all this. I really love your magazine.
Sophia Dworatzek, via email

Beren replies Hi Sophia – sending that love right back atcha, and the flowers and champagne is en route! I've looked into this with our subscription team and, with the help of a dirty big rusty knife and an unhindged glint in my eye, I've managed to get a pretty transparent response for you. It goes a bit like this…

'Occasionally we run seasonal promotions at a reduced rate to attract new subscribers – particularly at Christmas – to sell more gift subscriptions to ImagineFX. We need to attract new subscribers all the time to continue producing the magazine. New subscriptions are an entry point to becoming a longer-term reader, and then these subscribers receive the same renewal offers as you do. [I'm totally taking the credit for the next bit.] We also run promotions for existing subscribers, too, and so we're happy to match recent special offers for new subscriptions. This renewal offer will be open indefinitely, so feel free to renew in your own time. To do so, you can visit **http://ifxm.ag/renew-ifx**. Alternatively you can call us on +44 1604 251045 and quote 13E1 to gain the discount.'

DID YOU MISS THE RECENT MANGA ISSUE?
Turn to page 54 for more details on our brilliant 131 edition and others, too!

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention

Will Cartwright @wrcillustration

"Here's another character image of the ILOVEYOU virus."

Mark Kilkelly @Mark_Kilkelly

"I'm Mr Meeseeks, look at me! I've been tasked with preserving existence forever and it SUUUUCKS!"

Mark Abramowsky @MAbramowsky

"I call this piece Little Boy with a Big Toy"

Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!

Artist Q&A

STRUGGLING WITH A PAINTING TECHNIQUE OR TOPIC? EMAIL **HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM** TODAY!

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Artist Q&A
Need our advice?
Email **help@imaginefx.com** with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!

Question
What lighting will suit a flamethrower action scene?
Fran Perkins, England

Try to use your light sources and the amount of details you're painting to direct the viewer's eye to your focal areas.

ImagineFX VIDEO WORKSHOP

Answer
Mark replies

The film Aliens pops into my mind when I hear the word flamethrower. I'll depict a scene from the same universe, where a trooper discovers an alien nest.

Instead of going into full-on detailing I want to focus on creating the overall mood and lighting scheme for the scene, almost like a storyboard frame from a film. Using the flames as my main light source instantly places the focus on the action itself, which helps me clearly separate the soldier and the eggs visually.

Indeed, I want to separate the two worlds as much as possible, so I use a complementary secondary light source: a cold desaturated blue light to work against the aggressive warm orange of the flamethrower's flame. This not only helps to frame the soldier from both sides with rim lights, making his silhouette much more readable, but generates the most contrast around my focal point.

I ensure that the most values are associated with the character in the mid-ground.

Artist's secret
ADD SOME NOISE!
You can enhance the cinematic feeling of your artworks by adding some noise to the final image. In Photoshop click Filter>Noise>Add Noise... and drag the slider bar. This not only emulates the surface grain of older film negatives, but can also help to further unify your colours.

Step-by-step:
Using flames as your light source

1 I start the painting by blocking in my character and two main light sources present in the environment. I use the warm flames from the weapon as the origin of my main light and add another cold light from the opposite direction, which helps frame my character with rim lights and separate him from the background.

2 Now I work more on the design of the character – bulking out his armour – and fix some minor compositional problems. I'm pleased that the two light sources have helped to easily separate the different space segments from each other and make my composition and story more readable.

3 I like to add atmospheric effects to make my environment scenes look more believable, but I also remember that light sources affect the haze and smoke that I'm painting. Using a custom brush to paint moving particles will introduce extra dynamism to any scene, such as dust or flying embers in this case.

Question
How should I handle perspective when showing a character looking up inside a forest?
Abe Croma, Canada

Use a Soft brush to build up layers of ambient light and create distance in your painting, then exaggerate this to make objects appear impossibly large.

Answer
Charlotte replies

Careful planning is key to illustrating any scene with complex perspective. Start by plotting your vanishing point and creating a quick perspective grid to guide your sketch. I've drawn my grid by hand, but there are plenty of plugins, and perspective tools and brushes to help you with this task, depending on your art program. If you're painting a particularly organic scene, such as a forest or cliff face, remember to not follow your perspective lines too strictly.

In scenes from a worm's-eye view, the person's foreshortening will be dramatic; if you struggle with this kind of anatomy, use references when sketching out your character in such a scene. Another effective way of expressing distance in a landscape is using a technique called ambient perspective. Here, the further away something is the more washed out it becomes: the hue and value become closer to your general fill light (usually the same colour as your sky) until they're indistinguishable.

We can use this technique in our painting by gradually layering a lighter value over the tops of the tree trunks and our forest canopy (the most distant point in our image). This makes our trees look fantastically tall.

Plan out your scene by creating perspective guidelines before you start sketching. Keep your trees looking natural by using references and avoiding straight lines.

Artist's secret
THE POWER OF SUGGESTION
If you're painting a forest canopy, you can use saturation to hint at the sunlight beyond, without needing to paint in the sky itself. Subsurface scattering means leaves will be illuminated in direct light: suggest this by increasing the saturation of your treetops.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question
How can I show a creature smashing a wooden gate?
Corey Hoffman, US

Answer
Mark replies

You can create a more engaging image by implying what's going to happen, instead of showing it. I decide to paint the actions of the creature as seen from within the castle courtyard, depicting the moment when the gate is still intact, but it might break on the next impact.

The key to showing dynamism and movement in an image like this is to show the strength of the attack, not just on the gate, but also on the surrounding areas. Depicting the shaking ground, the flying dust and wooden shards is just one technique. There are some simple painting tricks as well to help you sell the scene.

Tilting your horizon line is one of the most basic options, giving the feeling that it's been caused by the force of the smash in this case. Adding more details to the focal area and leaving softer edges outside pulls in the viewer and adds movement.

You can also strengthen this feeling by applying some zoom Radial Blur (Filter>Blur>Radial Blur) to your final image. This adds motion blur to the sides but keeps the central area of the composition clean and sharp.

Beside the flying debris, I add more effects to the ground to suggest that even the earth is shaking because of the force of the attack.

It's better to indicate the ferocity of the attack rather than showing the actual hit. The brute force of the smash affects not just the gate, but all surrounding areas.

ImagineFX **VIDEO WORKSHOP**

Artist's secret
PAINT IN ADDITIONAL DAMAGE
You can strengthen the implied force of a hit if it seems to affect distant objects, too. The cracks and falling debris not only add more interest to your art, but will also create movement and dynamism.
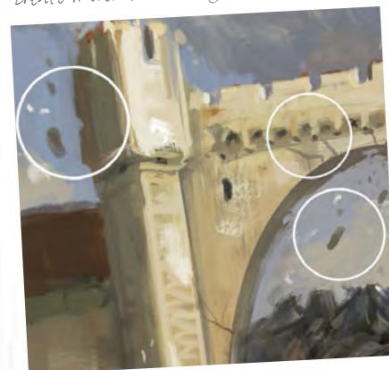
Step-by-step: Composition tips for suggesting action
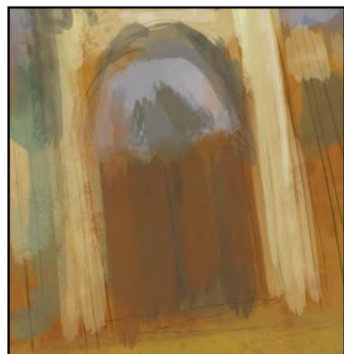
1 I start with a compositional sketch. I block in my main elements, putting the gate in the centre. I not only want to create more contrast around my focal area, but frame the gate and the creature behind with the towers and the arch. I also establish my overall colour palette by using a yellow-brown classical underpainting to make my desaturated purplish-blue sky more vivid.

2 The slightly tilted composition enables me to place more soldiers in the foreground, sell the scale of the image and add perspective. I also push my colours further and introduce more values and tones. Starting your image close to the mid-range in values is always helpful to balance out your image, before starting to develop more realistic lighting situations.

3 Now I fix the edges. I like to keep as many soft edges as possible on an image and focus the harder edges around my focal areas, to help sell the story. In addition to the harder edges, I also add more contrast to my mid- and foreground, and start to paint damage on the gate. The soft edges left in can also suggest movement and leave more to the imagination of the viewer.

4 In the finishing stages, although I want to make the composition really tight, I feel it needs a bit more air. So I push back the mid-ground. From this point I focus all detailing to the centre of the image, to show the strength of how the monster hits the gate. Because we can't see the actual hit, I paint in flying debris, flying shards of the gate, dust and so forth.

Keep your edges soft and use a limited palette to give the impression of a ghostly character. Controlling your light sources will also enhance the scene.

Question
How do I paint a ghost rising from a tomb?
Siân Levenson, Wales

Answer
Charlotte replies

The fun thing about painting ghosts is getting to play with supernatural light sources and ambiance in your scene. This is particularly true of any painting set in a tomb, cave or other dark environment.

If you're trying to paint a ghost rising from a tomb, try to light the tomb or effigy as if it's the ghost itself that's illuminating the stone. With this in mind, choose a cool, saturated colour such as green or aqua to act as your source light.

The next stage is to add tendrils of colour trailing from your ghostly figure to the stone effigy on top of the tomb, paying careful attention to the way that you place your brushstrokes. Try to always use your brush in the same direction that your character or object is moving, because this will make the motion in your image much more convincing. I'd advise selecting a Soft brush or the Smudge tool to gently soften the edges of your figure to make them appear incorporeal. Careful use of the Motion Blur filter can also enhance this supernatural effect.

As a final touch you can use a large cloud brush to add an ambient fog to your scene. If you set your layer mode to Color Dodge it'll immediately become more ethereal. I recommend playing with the Layer Opacity to find the best blend.

Motion blur, a Cloud brush, the Smudge tool and Color Dodge are all useful tools, but don't let them obscure your figure entirely!

Step-by-step:
Depict a convincing ghostly figure
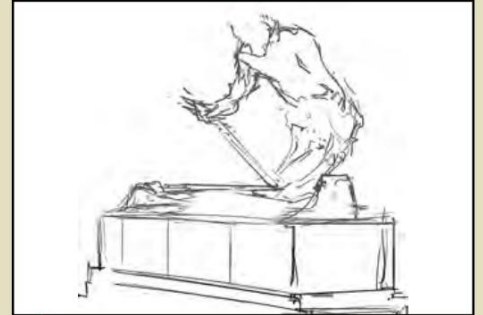
1 First I sketch out my composition. The posture of your figure helps to express their personality or intentions. One trick to creating undead characters is to make them lumbering or hunched, but here I decide to show it pulling a ghostly sword from the effigy. Storytelling can be key to selling a character.
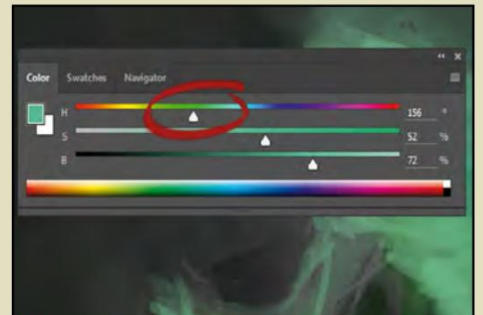
2 The dark tomb will accentuate the spectral glow of your ghost. When blocking in your painting, use a limited palette in cool colours, focusing on saturation and value to define your shapes. This will help tie your picture together and make it look like your character is the solitary glowing light source in the scene.
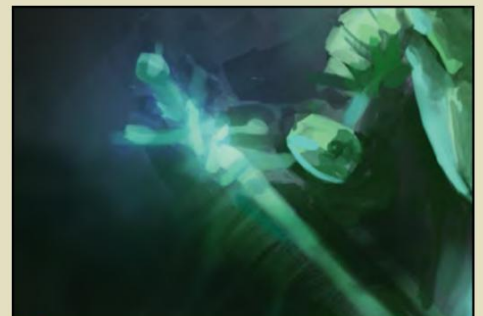
3 Use contrast and control the direction of your brushstrokes to direct your viewer's eye. This will aid storytelling and create a focal point. I push the hues of the image further towards blue to identify the sword as the key point in the story. Color Dodge mode can be an effective way to add this kind of colour.

Question

How do I paint the pelt of a fantasy beast hanging on a wall?

Regis Sinclair, Canada

Answer
Dave replies

Creating a pelt for a fantasy animal is a great exercise for the imagination, and the main thing to consider with this article is that either the overall shape should be reasonably familiar and recognisable, or the texture and patterning should be. If both aspects are too strange and unusual, the viewer may not read the object as a animal pelt.

Even a made-up animal will relate somehow to its environment. So before you tackle the depiction of the dead animal's pelt, spend a bit of time thinking about where your animal lives. Ask yourself questions such as what's the sunlight colour, and what climate does it live in? These can give you ideas for details and colouring that have inherent logic.

When a real-life pelt is spread flat on a floor or wall, we can see a rough configuration of the animal's body. It should probably be symmetrical, with the spine being the centreline of the shape. For my fantasy-based image, I'm going to choose a six-legged, furred beast that has scaled crests going along the spine.

To keep the pelt splayed out flat, I decide to attach it to a hanging wood frame, which helps to give a natural context and provide more visual interest.

As Harvey Dunn put it, I'll "let the edge carry the form" and immediately convey not only the shape of the animal, but the fur construction as well. This enables me to be more painterly within that shape. I'll use patterning pulled from real-life reference, but take the opportunity to be creative with the colouring.

To mix in some extra strangeness, I'll add a large carapace down the spinal ridge. Finally, a strange spear weapon hanging on the frame provides me with a bit more storytelling heft!
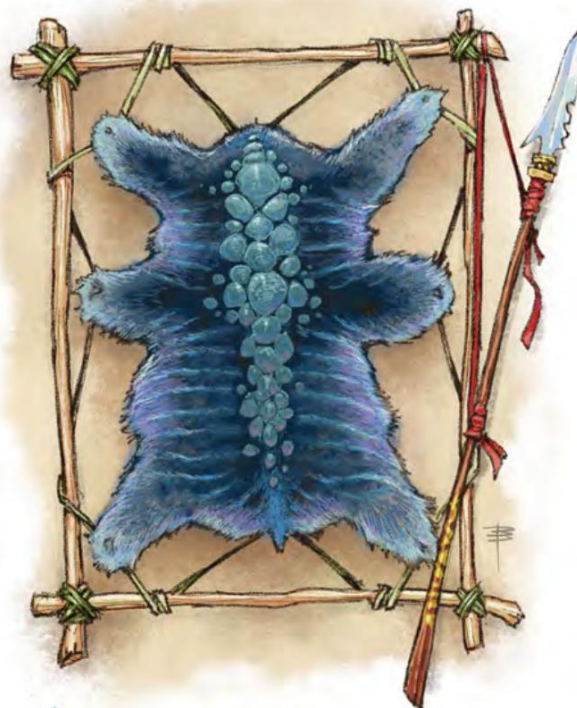
This fantasy pelt uses odd colouring and an arrangement of large scales to convey a strong sense of other-worldliness.

Each of these silhouettes feels recognisable as an animal pelt, even without colour or fur detail. You can go wild with texture and detail.

Question

How can I achieve bold, timeless comics colours?

Jacquie Penn, England

I use a bright, old school colour palette to complement the clean line work and the fun subject matter.

Answer
Tom replies

Your choice of comics colours may look good on screen, but might print much muddier than you predicted. So I make most of my colour decisions based on specific ink values that I know will print well. Back in the old days of comics, colourists had a limited palette: initially 63, then later 124 colours, each of these colours consisting of a combination of cyan, magenta and yellow. .

For this reason, I always keep track of the ink proportions I'm using by inputting my colour values numerically, using the CMYK sliders in Photoshop's Color menu (I always work in CMYK mode if the work is intended for print). I usually use multiples of five, so the basic flesh tone I used here equates to C=0, M=15, Y=20. Then I used direct multiples of that to add shading (for example, C=0, M=30, Y=40).

This leads to a very natural gradation of colour that seems rich and organic, even if it isn't photo realistic. This system also helps you prevent black creeping into your colours, which will muddy them up and obscure the detail in the inks.

Question
My photobashed vehicle looks awful – any tips?
Karol Gullen, US

Answer
Marcel replies

If you want a realistic look and feel to your vehicle, with detailed materials, then the use of photos can support your process.

The software I use most frequently in tackling similar briefs is Photoshop. It's manipulation tools enable me to crop and skew the photo reference into place. The Transform tool will assist with most of the changes to warp the images, while using Masks will ensure you focus on the photo parts that support the design.

While photos will give you speed and support visual solutions, you still need to choose references to match your vehicle. Mechanical photos, hard surface textures and electronic components should be selected carefully, or you'll end up with a mishmash of styles. Your sketch should remain the design thread throughout the process, with photos only optimising this foundation. This is why, even if designing a vehicle that belongs in a sci-fi adventure, you should refer back to real-world examples, especially if you feel that your design begins to lose readability.

I begin work on this hoverbike and look at the position bikers take on motorbikes, duplicating the design sketches around this seated position. I feel this injects more credibility into my depiction of an Arctic operative, rapidly scouring a tundra-like wasteland.

Heading towards to the next fuel and supply outpost before nightfall. The vehicle parts are put together in an unconventional way to surprise the viewer.
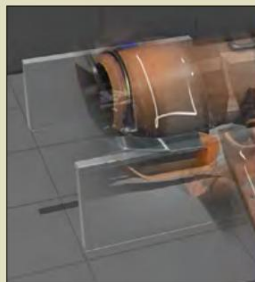
Once you've set up your base design, start roughly layering photos to explore different parts, surfaces and material direction for the hoverbike.

Step-by-step: Make your line work fly off the page

1 First I do my flatting. This is the process of filling in the basic areas of colour. I make sure every area is flush to the next, with no white between them by working on a separate layer from the inks and using the Lasso tool with the Anti-alias option switched off.

2 I then rough in my areas of shadow on a separate layer (I always keep a layer of just the flat colours as this enables me to select areas easily with the Magic Wand). This gives me an idea of what the full colour palette will look like. It's a quick process that instantly adds dimension.

3 From here I render the colours, using the shadow colours with a lower Opacity brush to build them up. I'll also add a few highlights tones and texture details. I do a test printout of the finished version, because sometimes the screen will flatter the rendering a little.

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Question

What are the things I should focus on when designing a sleek airlock on an advanced spaceship?

Jessie Armstrong, England

Answer
Marcel replies

When you're looking to design a specific environment like an airlock from scratch, a key thing to remember is that it isn't going to be a standalone piece. It's part of a larger vehicle or environment, so you need to consider not just the airlock's design, but how it fits in with your location's construction and purpose. The airlock acts as both a passageway and a safety feature, so it needs to look like something that can be used by individuals, but also something that has a lot of visual density.

I like to focus on shapes early on in the design to convey the heaviness and bulk of the door, something that can withstand the pressure difference. Material choices are key, not just for function, but also to match your settlement or ship. A docking station is likely to see a lot of back and forth, reflected in additional wear and tear. Whereas an outpost with a skeleton crew of scientists is going to be a lot cleaner and more sterile.

I pay special attention to readability, not just in the visuals but also in the elements in the scene. Most people aren't familiar with airlocks, so I need to convey the use of the surrounding equipment with simple and clear ideas.

Any aesthetic complexity comes from tailoring the scene to feel more technologically advanced. In this piece, I want to create a scientific module, as part of a larger habitat – just one of many outposts in the galaxy.

Surgical machinery was the inspiration to create a sterile, minimalistic theme to the scene.

I want to add an element that showcases that the environment was utilised by humans. The space suit also acts as a recognisable scaling device.
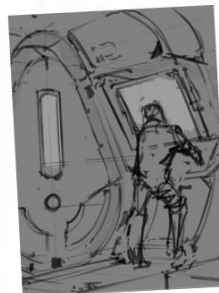
Artist's secret

IS THE SCALE RIGHT?

When working on an environment piece, double-check the scale of the elements around the scene. You can use a quick character sketch next to your components to control this, ensuring all the equipment present is fit for human use.

Step-by-step: Paint a readable space

1 Create thumbnails to establish design direction. Focus on big, bold shapes to establish your overall shape language. I want chose to show the airlock from the interior, to hint at its operation. Using line work will force you to resolve any design issues. Relying too much on photo reference at the sketch stage may act as a crutch for an unstable foundation.

2 I've set up a 3D base with some minor paint and photo elements to refine as I progress. This helps me to discover and establish opportunities to improve the design. The idea here is to find a unique theme by spending a bit more time on one component. Once I'm happy with that component, I'll apply the same approach to the rest of the scene.

3 I make another quick pass to ensure the design of each feature is clear and readable. More emphasis is placed on graphical design and user interface design – this needs to feel like a coherent, functional space. Once I'm satisfied that form follows function, I begin to work on refinement, tweaking the lighting and adding atmosphere.
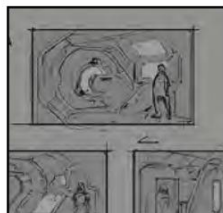
PURE ESCAPISM
Renato Casaro's poster for The NeverEnding Story captured the film's magic using tempera and a bit of airbrushing on cardboard.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF FANTASY FILM POSTERS

The 1980s was an era of wonderful fantasy films and, as **Garrick Webster** discovers, the poster art that accompanied them was just as astounding

There's a special kind of nostalgia that surrounds the fantasy and sci-fi films of the 1980s. Thanks to the impetus that Star Wars gave the film industry in the late-1970s, effects budgets grew and grew, but because CGI was a mere twinkle in John Lasseter's eye, the creatures and magic we witnessed were often handmade. They looked tactile, and films like The Dark Crystal and Time Bandits felt lived in and quirky, more like real life than a cold computer screen.

These were the days before Photoshop too, and the posters that enticed us into the cinemas were largely hand-painted. A whole crop of genius fantasy artists caught our imaginations with pencils, ink and paint, with three-sheet or quad-sized posters going up around town whenever a new fantasy picture was on its way.

More than that, our nostalgia is tweaked on a deeper, more psychological level. Fantasy films back then weren't just a distraction from boredom. Generation Y and hipster haircuts hadn't been invented. Back then kids were worried. Reaganomics and Thatcherism were ravaging economies. People began to die of AIDS. Famines killed millions in Africa. And the Cold War promised mutually assured Armageddon. So we gazed at Brian Bysouth's posters for Willow and Big Trouble in Little China. We were beckoned by the peculiar-looking Falkor, the luckdragon, on Renato Casaro's poster for The NeverEnding Story. Artists

> **A whole crop of genius fantasy artists caught our imaginations with pencils, ink and paint**

THE DIRECT METHOD
An accomplished illustrator himself, Terry Gilliam drew the Time Bandits poster himself, expertly conveying the film's inter-dimensional plot.

like John Alvin, Richard Amsel, Ted CoConis, Bob Peak and Drew Struzan gave us a gateway into imaginary realms.

John Alvin was brilliant when it came to evoking a sense of mystery. John passed away in 2005, but his daughter Farah not only grew up alongside his work, but also appeared in it. You know the famous poster in which E.T.'s finger reaches out towards a human hand? She was a small child at the time, and that's her hand in the picture.

"Much of E.T. was kept top secret by the studio – not ➤➤

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?
John Alvin's Gremlin's illustration sparks the viewer's curiosity and pulls you in.
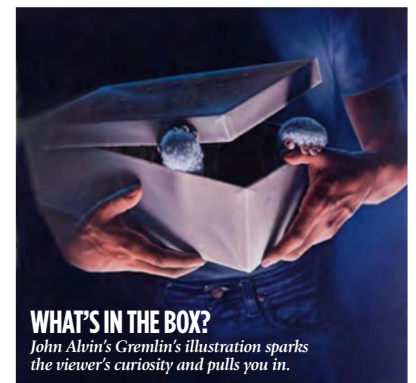
"Jim Henson was a great guy. Not only super creative, but also kind, gentle and humble"

THE INS AND OUTS OF LABYRINTH

We asked artist Ted CoConis about how his poster for Jim Henson's Labyrinth came about...

How did you land the Labyrinth poster job?
The advertising campaign was handled by Seiniger Associates in LA, but it was Jim Henson himself who wanted me to do the artwork. Jim and I had known each other since 1973 when he had commissioned me to create a piece for a Muppets Valentine Special starring Mia Farrow and Thog.

What was it like working with Jim Henson?
Since 1980 I had been withdrawing from the world of illustration in order to concentrate on my own art, but I was really intrigued with the idea of working with Jim again. He was a great guy. Not only super creative, but also kind, gentle and humble.

What did you get to work with?
I was given the script and hundreds of photographs: black and white prints as well as 35mm slides.

What was the thinking behind the pyramidal composition with Bowie at the top, and the colour palette?
It just seemed that the best way to capture the essence of the storyline and convey the charismatic omnipotence of Jareth the Goblin King was to interweave a base of interesting elements, then build outwards and upwards into a portrait of David Bowie with his crystal ball.

What media did you use?
In those days I worked almost exclusively in acrylics on hot-press illustration board. My usual method was to create a strong, finely detailed drawing in graphite over which I would paint in thin layers of acrylic, allowing the drawing to show through and maintain its strength and integrity.

INTO THE UNKNOWN
The design of E.T. was kept secret by the studio. All John Alvin had to work with were sketches of the alien hand.

FULL-ON MONTAGE
Brian Bysouth's art conveys the film's gritty urban action, and its dark, mystical side.

only the film itself, but what the characters and scenic elements looked like," she explains. "John was given a sketch of the alien's hand by a production designer to use for reference and then he took numerous Polaroids of my hand. He used these photos and the reference for the alien hand to create a composite sketch and then, ultimately, the painting we all know. The design concept, borrowed from Michelangelo, came from the studio. All of the aspects of light and colour were ultimately a product of his creativity."

CAPTURE A FILM'S HEART AND SOUL
John would often say that his job was "to create the promise of a great experience" and he worked on the concepts of the posters as much as their execution. The artist sought to identify the key elements of a film – its heart and soul – to convey in a single, emotive image.

With those little mogwai paws reaching out from under the shoebox lid, John's artwork for Gremlins is one of the most memorable of all time. "What was important about the Gremlins poster was to indicate that this cute, delightful creature had the potential to become horrible," explains Farah. "But the film is sort of campy and scary, not gory, so I think he had to walk a very careful line and play up the mystery rather than the horror. You can't help but look at this poster and want to know what's in the box! That curiosity is, of course, the downfall of the characters in the film. So this poster reels you into the spirit and tone of the movie quite beautifully."

Generating intimacy with the observer is something a good painter can do if they have a unique style. Richard Amsel died of HIV in 1985, but his poster work for films such as Raiders of the Lost Ark, The Dark Crystal and Flash Gordon continues to

Another World, Another Time...
In the Age of Wonder.
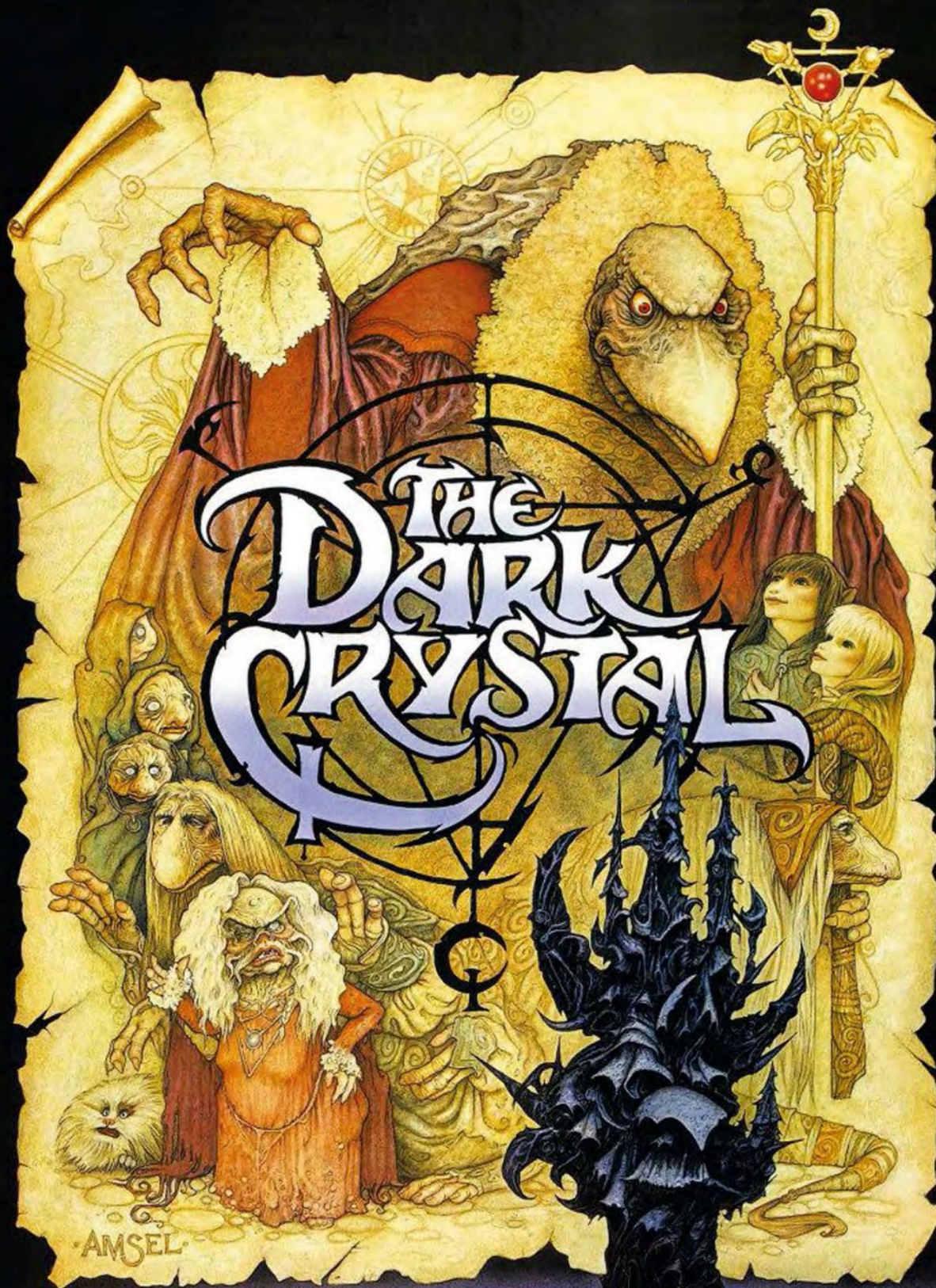
THE DARK CRYSTAL

ART DECO
Richard Amsel used a number of layers in this poster. The type is central, with the characters hinting at the story around it.

ITC ENTERTAINMENT Presents
A JIM HENSON Film
"THE DARK CRYSTAL"

Directed by JIM HENSON and FRANK OZ   Produced by JIM HENSON and GARY KURTZ

MAGIC MAN
Renato Casaro's poster for the The Adventures of Baron Munchausen combined scenes from the movie.

> **"** The guy's got mascara on, wears a sequin dress and has a sparkly ring of power. It's wonderfully kitschy **"**

**PATHETIC EARTHLINGS...
WHO CAN SAVE YOU NOW?**

FLASH GORDON

Music by QUEEN

DINO DE LAURENTIIS Presents FLASH GORDON

SAM J. JONES ★ MELODY ANDERSON ★ ORNELLA MUTI ★ MAX VON SYDOW ★ TOPOL ★ TIMOTHY DALTON
MARIANGELA MELATO as Kala ★ BRIAN BLESSED ★ PETER WYNGARDE ★ Screenplay by LORENZO SEMPLE, JR.
Produced by DINO DE LAURENTIIS ★ Directed by MIKE HODGES Filmed in TODD-AO® A UNIVERSAL RELEASE

DARKNESS
John Alvin wanted to play with the themes of good and evil with the Legend poster. This is a graphite sketch of Tim Curry's demonic character.

resonate because the artist's hand is clear in the rendering of the images.

Adam McDaniel works in a film studio, and is an expert on Richard's art. "His use of pencils was extraordinary, as he'd draw in all sorts of frenzied directions, while maintaining control and getting the details just right," says Adam. "He was very gifted in capturing personalities, too; it wasn't enough to make something look photorealistic."

INTERGALACTIC KITSCH

Richard's playful side came to the fore in his Flash Gordon poster. "The movie's called Flash Gordon, but it's Ming the Merciless who's front and centre, his penetrating gaze directed right at us, like a serpent ready to strike," says Adam. "But the guy's got mascara on, wears a sequin dress, and has a sparkly ring of power. It's all wonderful, kitschy, 1930s sci-fi serials, as seen through the foggy vision of a 1970s glam rock concert. Richard wasn't out to make it look serious. He was in on the joke, and made the film look like the silly fun it was."

His poster for Jim Henson's The Dark Crystal is stunning, and was innovative at the time. He centred the work around logo art created for the film by Brian Froud, who also designed many of its creatures. On one layer there's a piece of velum with a montage of strange characters. The castle housing the crystal and the broken landscape around it burst up from the bottom of the poster in

FLASH! AH-AH!
The great Richard Amsel camped up the 1980 revival of Flash Gordon, the art deco elements effectively invoking its 1930s origins.

front of the parchment. It speaks of mythology, legend, and a time long ago.

Jim Henson and Brian Froud also made Labyrinth together, and as with The Dark Crystal all the film's charm comes from its creatures and characters. This time, the artist Ted CoConis – who'd previously done posters for Fiddler on the Roof and Hair – was commissioned for the artwork. Supplied with the idea of the Labyrinth and a logotype for the movie, the challenge for Ted was to bring the key characters together without it looking too complex. The film struggled at the box office, but its poster is iconic and today it has a cult following.

"Every single character is a work of art in itself:

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK REDUX

Richard Amsel's poster for the 1982 re-release of Raiders of the Lost Ark perfectly embodies the film, conveying the characters, the intrigue and the whip. **Adam McDaniel**, an expert on Richard's techniques, talks us through its creation

1 Richard would often make scores of preliminary thumbnail sketches, trying to figure out how best to capture that direct essence of a design.
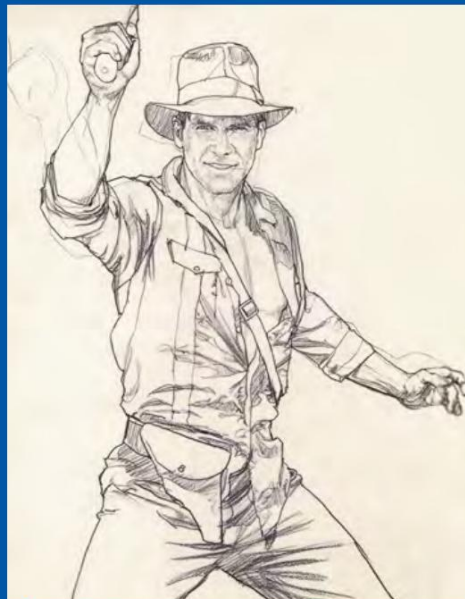
2 Once he'd chosen a route to follow, he'd draw a more solid and accurate sketch – here he still gave himself options on the whip arm position.
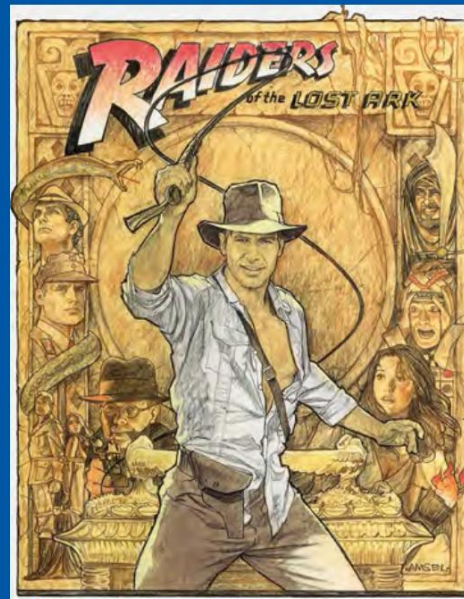
3 Richard would then render a rather detailed colour comp, which he would show for creative approvals before embarking on the final illustration.

INCONCEIVABLE!

Steve Crisp's highly unusual composition for the UK release of The Princess Bride captures several story elements in what's almost a book cover. The right-hand portion of the image is still used on the DVD case.

Heroes. Giants. Villains. Wizards. True Love.
Not just your basic, average, everyday, ordinary, run-of-the-mill, ho-hum fairy tale.

A ROB REINER FILM
THE
PRINCESS
BRIDE

ACT III COMMUNICATIONS Presents
A REINER/SCHEINMAN Production WILLIAM GOLDMAN'S THE PRINCESS BRIDE
CARY ELWES · MANDY PATINKIN · CHRIS SARANDON · CHRISTOPHER GUEST · WALLACE SHAWN · ANDRE THE GIANT
introducing ROBIN WRIGHT Special Appearances by PETER FALK · CAROL KANE · MEL SMITH · PETER COOK and BILLY CRYSTAL
Edited by ROBERT LEIGHTON Production Designed by NORMAN GARWOOD Director of Photography ADRIAN BIDDLE Music by MARK KNOPFLER
Executive Producer NORMAN LEAR Screenplay by WILLIAM GOLDMAN Produced by ANDREW SCHEINMAN and ROB REINER
Directed by ROB REINER

The Return of the Great Adventure.

RAIDERS of the LOST ARK

④ For the final poster art Richard would start with the detailed pencils, work with washes of paint, then add coloured pencils and gouache in a back and forth process until he was happy with the results.

TRILOGY
Here's the final teaser poster for Willow painted by John Alvin. The negative space to the left hints that there's more to come for viewer and for the characters.

W·I·L·L·O·W

GRAPHITE
Here's John Alvin's sketch for the second of his three Willow posters. It depicts the journey that the characters take in the film.

W·I·L·L·O·W
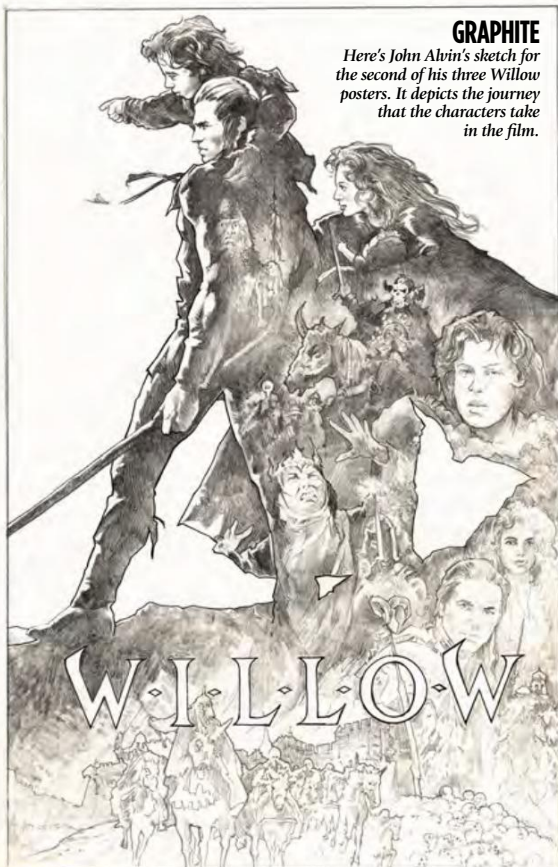
" Jim picked a handful of key figures, and I was free to tie everything together with whichever ones worked best "

➤ brilliantly conceived, masterfully constructed," says Ted. "In the end, Jim picked out a handful of key figures, and I was free to tie everything together with whichever ones worked best for the design.

"I was completely free to do whatever I thought would work best in terms of concept and design. The only client input – which I had to override – was their insistence that Sarah be portrayed in blue jeans. That was completely inappropriate for the look and feeling of the painting as well as the movie itself. She simply had to be wearing the gorgeous gown she wore in that fabulous ballroom scene."

MISSING A TOUCH OF MAGIC
Today, it's easy to see photos of the characters being montaged together, much like the posters for The Lord of the Rings films. But where would be the fun in that?

Renato Casaro, who painted over 1,500 posters during his career, including those for The NeverEnding Story, believes that without the hand of an artist, today's posters are often devoid of that touch of magic.

"Hand-painted artwork died in the 90s," Renato laments. "To give you an idea of what we've lost, The Folkwang Museum in Essen, which is the most important poster gallery in Germany, organised a big retrospective including my movie posters. During the exhibition they invited graphic design students to transfer my artwork into Photoshop, and use elements of my artwork to create new posters. The results were unsatisfactory; they were unable to capture the special magic that you need in particular for movie posters."

How do we get some of that 80s magic back into movie poster art? Perhaps what some of these wonderful illustrators we've talked about here lends some inspiration. A sense of mystery and expectation, the return of a painterly feel, evidence of a painter's hand, and a fresh injection of character might just help us to escape the pressures of the 21st century, or at least feel a bit less like we're being marketed to. Artists, it's over to you! 🔵

JULIE DILLON

Six months into her career as an artist Julie almost quit. Then a commission changed her life. **Gary Evans** finds out more…

R ather than taking notes during lectures on computer science, Julie Dillon sat and doodled in the margins of her notepad. Technical theatre didn't capture her imagination either – not the same way that drawing did.

The American hadn't gone to art school because she saw it as an expensive gamble, with the odds stacked against her ever making it as an artist after graduation. Being a painter or an illustrator, making a living from art, building a career in the creative industries… these were things other people did.

Julie switched from one course to the next until, in 2015, she graduated from Sacramento State University with a degree in fine arts – a course she found unsatisfying and prescriptive.

"Sac State's art programme was, at best, unhelpful," says Julie, "at worst, it was discouraging and damaging. I tried to learn what I could from that school, but the faculty were all very anti-illustration, many even anti-traditional skill building, instead forcing students to focus solely on their approved version of postmodern and abstract art. I think there's a lot to appreciate in modern and postmodern art, but not if that's all you're teaching. Students still need help with anatomy, colour theory and composition."

The graduate signed up to classes at San Francisco's Academy of Art University. Julie couldn't afford another full degree, so focused on the basic skills she felt Sacramento State overlooked. These ➤➤

Artist PROFILE

Julie Dillon
LOCATION: California, US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Alphonse Mucha, Jon Foster, John William Waterhouse and Andrew Jones
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop
WEB: www.juliedillonart.com

SUN SHEPHERDESS
"I love working mythical and celestial elements into my art, to help it feel larger than life."

SEEKING WITHOUT
"This is a little different in tone than what I normally do, but I just really felt I had to paint it."
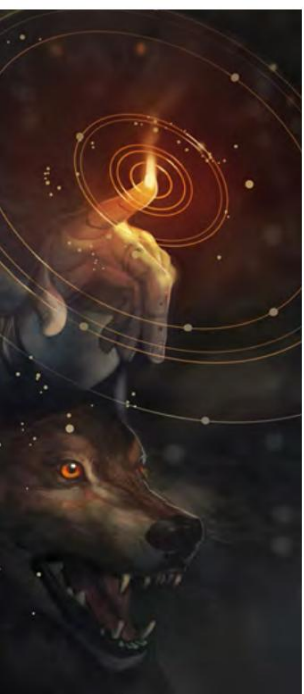
ANCIENT DISCOVERY
"This was a commissioned piece for a client that ended up being a lot of fun."

❝ I took the classes I could afford, tried to learn on my own, and pieced together my education ❞

FLESH TO ASHES
"I was a big Magic: The Gathering fan in my teens, and it was exciting to finally do some cards for them."
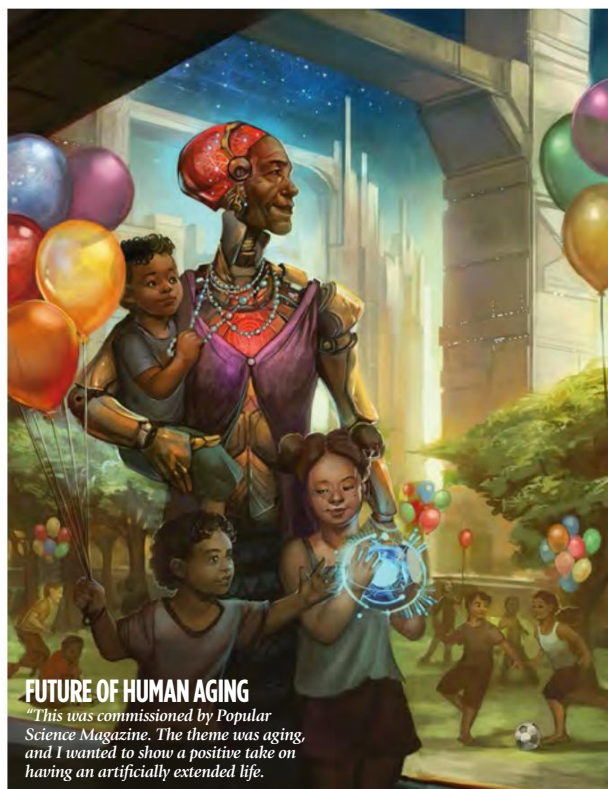
FUTURE OF HUMAN AGING
"This was commissioned by Popular Science Magazine. The theme was aging, and I wanted to show a positive take on having an artificially extended life.

⇥ fundamentals became the foundations on which she built her whole career.

"Thanks to the internet, I realised art jobs existed and that normal people like me could potentially succeed in those fields. I took the classes I could afford, tried to learn on my own, and pieced together my education where I could. I might have had a more successful career earlier on if I had gone to art school, but I also would have been lugging around massive student loan debts, and not having that on my shoulders has been a huge help financially.

"After a few years of study, when I felt ready, I made the decision to really push for full-time work as a freelancer. It took about six months of steady job hunting – sending out my portfolio, contacting art directors – before I started getting regular gigs."

Six months into her career as an artist, Julie almost quit. But then Dragon magazine – the now defunct Dungeons & Dragons publication – contacted her, asking for character designs to illustrate an article.

The work came just in time and led to commissions with Tor Books and Wizards of the Coast. "It took a few years to get to a point where I was bringing in a somewhat regular income. If it hadn't worked out, I might have pursued theatrical design or defaulted back to computer science."

MULTI AWARD-WINNER

In 2015, for the second year running, Julie left the Hugo Awards ceremony having been crowned Best Professional Artist. She's won four Chesley Awards. Her work regularly features in Spectrum – the annual celebrating the world's best sci-fi and fantasy art. All this in a career not yet 10 years old.

"I don't know that it'll ever not feel surreal. I know I have the awards, but I don't really think about it all that much. It still feels like I got them too early on in my career, like I'm not at the level I feel like artists should be at before they start getting really noticed. It's definitely an encouraging ego boost that helps one's self confidence.

A BIG BREAK FOR A STRUGGLING ARTIST

Julie was ready to give up her art dreams and go back to a life in retail, when a career-changing commission came in…

Julie struggled to find work as a fledgling freelancer. "My first ever gig with Paizo Publishing was a major career milestone. I was just on the verge of having to give up and go back to working retail when finally I heard back from the art directors for Dragon Magazine."

The magazine required several simple quarter-page character designs for a feature. But there was one problem. "The deadline was tighter than anything I'd worked on before, but I did the work quickly and decently enough, and the company ended up giving me work for the next few years.

"Having that experience eventually opened up new opportunities for me at larger publishers like Wizards of the Coast and Tor Books, both of which I wouldn't have been qualified for without all the hard work I did for Paizo."

PAIZO COMMISSIONS
"These were my first commissions with Paizo Publishing, which really helped get my career going."

© Paizo Publishing

> 66 If things hadn't worked out, I might have pursued theatrical design or defaulted back to computer science 99

But I'm very aware that I still have a lot of hard work to do. It's important to not rest on one's laurels."

The freelancer works at home in northern California, maintaining a loose routine that tightens around deadline. The perfect days starts early, several hours of brainstorming and sketching, before a mid-afternoon break to walk, bike ride or garden. Detail painting – which Julie finds relaxing – is left until the evenings. When her workload's heavy, the artist selects two tasks each day and gives them her full attention.

Julie fills sketchbooks with notes and thumbnails, but rarely develops ideas on paper. She made the switch to digital painting while still in her teens. An intricate piece can require as much as 20 hours' work. The more work the freelancer won, the more important it became to work efficiently. Creating pieces digitally, with Photoshop's option to quickly lay in flat areas of colour, helped significantly with speed. Julie sped up her process further by again going back to basics, hitting the books and brushing up on figure drawing, anatomy and still-life studies, casting a critical eye over the art of both peers and masters.

"I start with a general concept or feeling I want to convey," she says. "Sometimes the composition jumps right in my head, exactly the way I want it. But often I have to brainstorm a little bit to figure out the ➼

THE VERY BEST OF KATE ELLIOTT
"This was originally a private commission by Kate Elliott, and we ended up using it as a cover on her career retrospective anthology."

RED GIANT
"I really liked the idea of a huge ancient robot just floating in space – in this case, in orbit around a red giant."

ELLIPTIC
"This started out as me challenging myself to do something with a more muted colour palette, but evolved into a full illustration."

ESCAPING THE CLIENT MAZE

Julie explains how a piece rejected by a client ended up being one of her favourite paintings

Ariadne and the Minotaur is an epic painting, complex in light and composition. "This is my take on the myth of the minotaur in the labyrinth," Julie says. "Ariadne is going to take matters into her own hands. I really enjoy working with slightly abstracted and surreal elements when I'm given the opportunity or when it makes sense to do so."

The opportunity arose as part of a commission. When the client decided the image wasn't what they were looking for, Julie forgot about the piece. When she next looked over Ariadne and the Minotaur, she liked the concept so much she decided to complete it as a personal project, rejuvenating her love of painting for painting's sake.

"I was asked to make thumbnails for a commissioned project. I really liked this idea and layout, but the client wanted me to go in a different direction. So, a while later, I went back and revisited the concept and ended up finishing it on my own. Now it's one of my favourite pieces."

ARIADNE
"This is a surreal and interpretive approach to the myth of Minotaur and the Labyrinth."

THE ARCHIVIST
"I'm intrigued by breaking up space into geometric or abstracted forms, and I loved the visual idea of a library consisting of floating cubes."

best way to approach the concept, to best express the idea I want to express. I work on rough sketches and thumbnails in Photoshop, and either decide on one myself or, if it's client work, send it off to an art director for approval.

"From there, I develop the sketch a little further, making sure the basic composition and lighting is roughed out and that figures are detailed enough to see what's going on. Once the sketch is blocked in, I add colour by creating a new layer in Photoshop,

has trouble defining exactly what that is. "My art is a means of visual and symbolic expression, a way to convey ideas or concepts that are easier to express visually than verbally or logically. When I try explain why I do what I do, it's sometimes tricky to figure out what to say beyond, 'It felt right, looked right.' That said, my work tends to be colourful and evocative, hopeful, with a strong focus on narrative – whether it's an overt narrative or a more subtle, symbolic one."

" When I try explain why I do what I do, it's sometimes tricky to figure out what to say beyond, 'It felt right, looked right' "

setting it to Hard Light blending mode, and painting in big areas of colour. This blending mode enables me to create a vibrant underpainting on top of the sketch, and once I have the basic colour areas figured out, I can create a Normal layer and begin painting. From there, it's just a matter of rendering the piece until it's done."

A FUTURE FULL OF FINE IDEAS
In the future, Julie plans to both illustrate and write her own stories, experiment with sculpture and perhaps even return to fine art. But she's not giving up on the kind of art she's become famous for – even if she

Julie often wonders if she could have composed a piece differently, presented a subject from another angle or combined colours to greater effect. The image onscreen rarely appears equal to the vision in her head. Her success comes from the tireless pursuit of that vision. "To tell a good piece from a great piece, I ask myself: is this piece executed with technical proficiency, does it have heart, and does it say something of meaning or interest? It's hard to get all three working in a single piece. A lot of times, even though a piece looks decent enough, I can feel something is off. I have to figure out
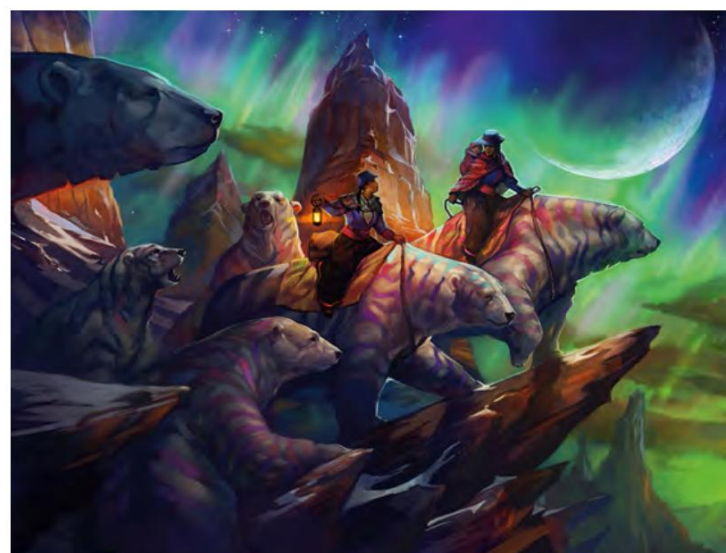
SOUTHERN LIGHTS
"I just thought it would be fun to do a piece where women are riding magical polar bears in Patagonia against the backdrop of the Southern Lights."

which area it's lacking in and try to correct it. Unfortunately, this usually involves having to rework parts of the image to give it the punch it needs."

She has some advice for aspiring artists. "Just because you don't make it right away doesn't mean you never will. Just because you aren't good at something right away doesn't mean you'll always be terrible at it. It's okay if you mess up. Don't despair. Trust in yourself and do what you love. It will work out."

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Alvin Lee's art of Jinx from League of Legends heralds our manga issue, featuring a fresh take on Katniss Everdeen by Ilya Kuvshinov, advice from Legends of the Cryptids artist Laura Sava, and a sculpture workshop from the mighty Shiflett Brothers!

Issue 130
January 2016
A host of top-flight artists help us to celebrate turning 10 years old. Ross Tran's cover art ushers in the likes of Craig Mullins, Syd Mead, Brom, Mélanie Delon, Todd Lockwood and Allen Williams, who all contribute workshops. Plus there's a free 2016 calendar!

Issue 129
Christmas 2015
Andrew Theophilopoulos paints Kylo Ren facing off against Rey, in our spectacular Star Wars special issue. Also inside are Aaron McBride, Iain McCaig, Terese Nielsen, Feng Zhu, Brian Sum and Hugh Fleming, all revealing their art from a galaxy far, far away…

Issue 128
December 2015
We mine the rich seam of indie comics starting with 21st Century Tank Girl, brought to life by Brett Parson. Tintin and Hellboy also get the reimagination treatment. Fiona Staples talks about the success of Saga, while Lewis LaRosa passes on his comic storytelling advice.

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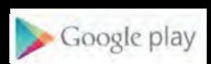
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2MINDS

The two-person, independent studio punching above its weight in Brazil

The small concept art and illustration studio 2Minds didn't get overelaborate when coming up with a name. Why be needlessly fancy when something simple works just fine? The studio is the marriage of two minds, those of Brazilians Thiago Lehmann and Luiza McAllister. The pair have been working together since 2010, their contrasting mix of styles and skills aiding each other. When they were interns at a design studio they decided they'd like to illustrate together.

The couple quickly established a thriving home studio, with global clients including major advertising firms, as well as concept pieces, game art and fan art. "The initial results were beyond our expectations," says

> **We are each other's art director – and we're highly demanding art directors!**

One of several characters 2Minds created for its Profundus art book of traditional illustrations.

Luiza. "Because our styles were really different, we kept ourselves motivated by comparing the resulting studies every day."

"After a couple of months the first client contacted us and we've been working non-stop ever since. We discovered that in combining each of our strengths the results are unique. It also helped us to work faster and improve the quality of our designs, since we are each other's art director for every project we do – and we are highly demanding art directors with each other!"

Although the studio only comprises the pair, they rely on a roster of skilled partners to help out on more complex projects. This is reflected in the studio's portfolio, which displays a wide range of styles and excisions – they are masters of multiple art forms.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Being a simple arrangement does have further upsides: it means the pair can be absolutely clear in what work they take on and what they pass on, as Thiago explains: "We only work on things we are passionate about. And we're always trying to improve."

This constant searching to improve and innovate is a further strand of the studio's portfolio. Within it you'll find client projects mixed with personal work. All of it different, interesting and brilliantly executed. "We love creating and developing our own projects," says Thiago. "We try to bring new stuff to the table – different media, different styles, different point of view. Our personal projects keep us motivated and help us improve our performance in freelance jobs. We're creating new techniques all the time to achieve the results our clients expect."

The studio recently worked with Riot Games Brazil on the Jungle Hunting Season project for League of Legends. They were also commissioned by Alderac

Behold, one of the cute but fearsome Pet Warriors!

©Riot Games

LOCATION: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
PROJECTS: It's Your Fault, League of Legends, Love Letter
OTHER PROJECTS: Danoninho Dino City, Taptiles Saga
WEB: www.2minds.ws
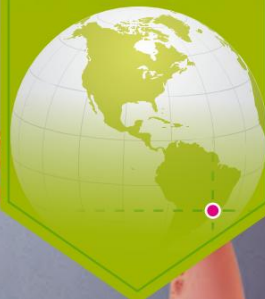
Another curious character from 2Minds' Profundus art book of oceanic creatures.

SAY HI TO GROMP

2Minds worked with Riot Games on the League of Legends character who eats insects and people!

"This piece gave us a lot of visibility! Working with Riot Brazil and our art directors Marco Aurélio ("Wendigo") and Vitor Ishimura was really nice; we learned a lot from them. The studio was contacted by Ishimura who already knew our work.

We were responsible for the three first images to be released for this project: Gromp, The Wolves and Blue. Those illustrations are wallpapers for the Riot players who had to collect some objectives in the game to liberate some achievements and release the arts one by one. We are really thankful and it really made us proud!

All art was digitally created, from sketches to final renders. We made a few rough sketches with layout ideas. These were the first 'splash screen art' for the characters, so we had to keep them very similar to their in-game models and add a lot of detail without losing their personalities. Since the model was low poly, the biggest reference was the animation cycles for spawning, attacking and defeat. It was a nice challenge with a lot of positive feedback from fans. We really enjoyed working on it."

2Minds' work on League of Legends character Gromp needed lots of detail without losing established personality.

Do you give me a stroke or not? Another of 2Minds' Pet Warriors.

Where the magic happens: 2Minds' studio space is a place of both discipline and spontaneity.

➤ Entertainment Group, producing two decks of the new expansion It's Your Fault, four decks for the Pretty Pretty Smash Up expansion, as well as all the artwork for the upcoming game Love Letter.

"Previously we worked with Arkadium, creating concept art and character art for the Taptiles Saga game. We also worked with Zombie Studio, contributing to their advertising concept art projects and also developing a big project for Danone Latin America's Danoninho Dino City."

ONE BIG CON

In 2014 2Minds created its first art book, called Profundus, a traditional illustration concept of oceanic creatures. For the launch campaign they also painted two acrylic pieces and two digital posters. All 250 sold out when the studio attended the first installation of Brazil's Comic Con Experience. The goal for the project was to explore traditional techniques instead of their day-to-day digital work – and they managed that with aplomb.

In December 2015, 2Minds published its first comic book, Plumba. The project compared the pair's desire to combine a traditional adventure story with high-definition work, developing different concepts and styles for each chapter. The final result is a comic book that feels like a concept art book.

In terms of workflow, the pair are highly structured to the point of being strict – surprising given the instantaneous and free flowing nature of their work. "We usually start with a lot of thumbnails and sketchy silhouettes – trying to understand the shapes and dynamics we need to build the illustration," says Luiza. "We send these to the client, so they can participate in the whole project. Every decision is shared.

"This first experimental phase really depends on the client's directions. We start with variety and try to narrow it down, depending on client feedback. Some directors change their minds when they get a chance to see a different angle of something they already had in mind. This process allow us to participate more actively in the creation process, instead of just following orders."

After the central concept is agreed, the pair split the work into two phases. Thiago

> ❝ The dream is to work with things we love – and maybe get money in the process! ❞

is responsible for the conceptual ideas. He sketches all projects and creates the final layout and line art for each piece. Luiza decides the colour schemes and paints and renders all final art – and does the majority of client communication.

LIVING THE DREAM

In terms of the future, both Thiago and Luiza are content to see what develops naturally rather than striving after a five-year-plan. "Since we are a couple, our goals are similar and happily we are aligned with what we are expecting for the future!" says Luiza. "We are really happy with what we've achieved over the past couple of years.

"We hope that in the next couple of years we can still work with board games and digital games and keep the personal work up to date. The dream is to keep working with the independent things we love – and maybe get some money in the process!"

Blue is another character 2Minds created with Riot Games for League of Legends.

©Riot Games

BRAZIL GOES NUTS

Marvel at 2Minds' Pokedex Project!

Inspired by the Kanto Pokedex Project (curated by 152 artists globally), 2Minds invited Brazilian artists to contribute. The result is this Pokémon character series, each inspired and created with a unique Brazilian flair.

2MINDS
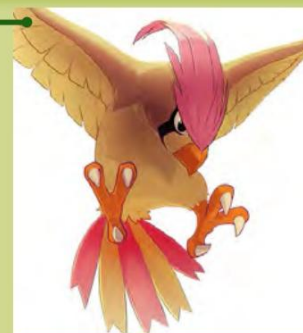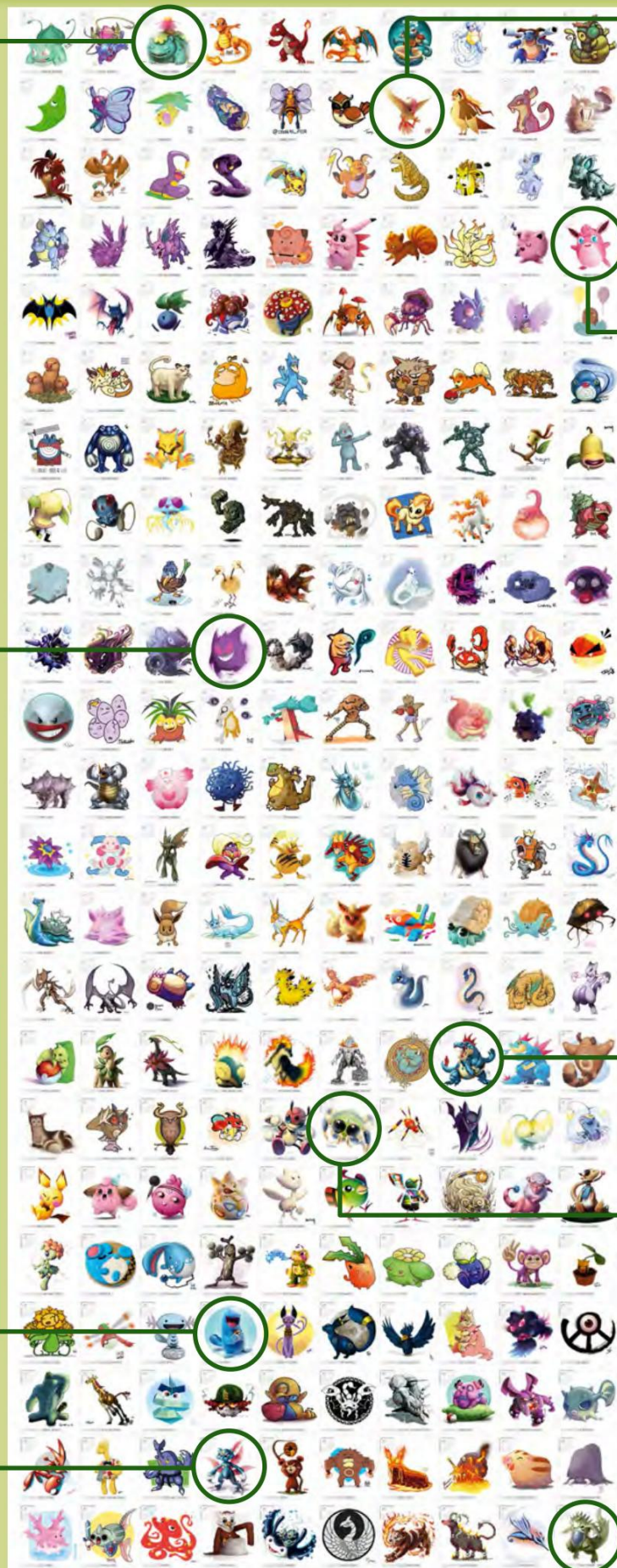
Venusaur **(Thiago Lehmann)**

2MINDS

Gengar **(Luiza McAllister)**

Quagsire **(Vitorugo)**

Sneasel **(Bruna Richter)**

Pidgeotto **(Elisa Kwon)**

Wigglytuff **(Vinicius Souza)**

Croconaw **(Caio Monteiro)**

2MINDS

Spinarak **(Luiza McAllister)**

2MINDS

Tyranitar **(Thiago Lehmann)**

Sketchbook

Paul Bonner

The veteran games industry designer and illustrator introduces us to his dwarfs, goblins and dragons

Artist PROFILE

Paul Bonner
COUNTRY: Denmark

Born in Yorkshire, Paul studied illustration at Harrow College. For some years he worked at Games Workshop in Nottingham, including on Warhammer 40K, and has also done art and design for World of Warcraft, French game publisher Rackham and Swedish game company Riotmind, which produces both online and boardgame adventures.
www.facebook.com/paulbonnerart

DWARF WITH HELMET

"I've always loved dwarfs, especially the grooming of their hair, beards and moustaches. It can be difficult to see how they'd eat or drink, but I feel a need to keep an iconic look. Even if I'm tempted to festoon them in plaits, rings and trinkets, they end up pared down to that simplified look."

TROLL WITH HUGE TUSKS

"Most of my sketching is very scrappy – a necessary evil – before I can get on with painting, but I do get caught up in the characters, needing to establish someone believable to hang the narrative on. The tiniest tweaks to a nose, brow or jawline can make a huge difference, so it can be difficult to stop. Occasionally, I stumble upon it and instantly know 'There's my leading actor!'"

"I often have great ideas and happily scribble away, only to find that ideas just won't fit together"

LITTLE SHRUNKEN HEAD

"This was sketched from life, or death I suppose. A little friend I got from wizard sculptor Thomas Kuebler. I should do it more – it's quite relaxing, drawing something that's already there without having to tax my imagination. A good reminder of how it's always about looking, and understanding what you're looking at."

DWARF WITH HAMMER

"This was more of a technical drawing, as I was far from sure how to get his armour and accoutrements to sit properly on his body. I often have great ideas and happily – or naively – scribble away, only to find that ideas won't fit together. Then it's compromise after compromise until the whole thing is diluted to nothing, scrapped and redone."

DRAGON

"This will eventually be a dead dragon, thanks to Beowulf. He's not there yet. His top jaw will be caught on a rock, the bottom one hanging loose. Very tricky jaw angles, and deceptive perspective when the jaws are open. When I get around to painting it, it'll be fun to try to give the dragon a hint of character, yet not stray too far from a cold and primitive reptilian force of nature."

BEOWULF

"Here's Beowulf entering Grendel's lair, knowing Grendel's mother is waiting. Early sketches trying to show him not so much as an invincible hero – boring! – but rather a very apprehensive warrior, just being sensible and careful, not knowing what to expect. It will all be down to the eyes!"

Colour 48

WOLFRIDERS

"I knew the body language I wanted for the goblin, just had to fit him on a wolf. I love doing animals, so it was fun – like with the dragon – playing with giving the wolf some character, without falling over into clichés. I wanted an animal, not a monster."

GOBLIN WITH STRIPEY EARS

"Beady eyes. Big noses. Jagged teeth. I never get tired of goblins scuttling around in my imagination. It's just difficult settling on characters when tiny tweaking can change everything. I suppose I'll just have to do a painting with hundreds of them in it. One day."

DRAGON FACING RIGHT

"A very much alive dragon... for the time being. I much prefer dragons showing their age and cunning, with lots of scars, scratches and wrinkles. I guess they can be noble, golden and majestic, awe-inspiring creatures. Just not in the worlds that I tramp around in."

"Could he tie a strap under his beard? Where will his ears fit? See? Who'd be an artist?"

BROWN WOLFRIDER 2

"I got the basic face I wanted, then spent ages trying to get the body to conform to it and sit on the wolf. Sometimes I know I should work up the anatomy together as one organic thing, but individual eureka moments demand subservience from the rest of the composition!"

LAST DWARF

"Playing with ideas for Beowulf's boar's head helm and facial hair. Sometimes something that looks okay from the front just looks silly from the side, or is just impractical. Would the helm's cheek armour press down into his moustache? Would the moustache ends be on top of it? Could he tie a strap under his beard? Where will his ears fit? See? Who'd want to be an artist?"
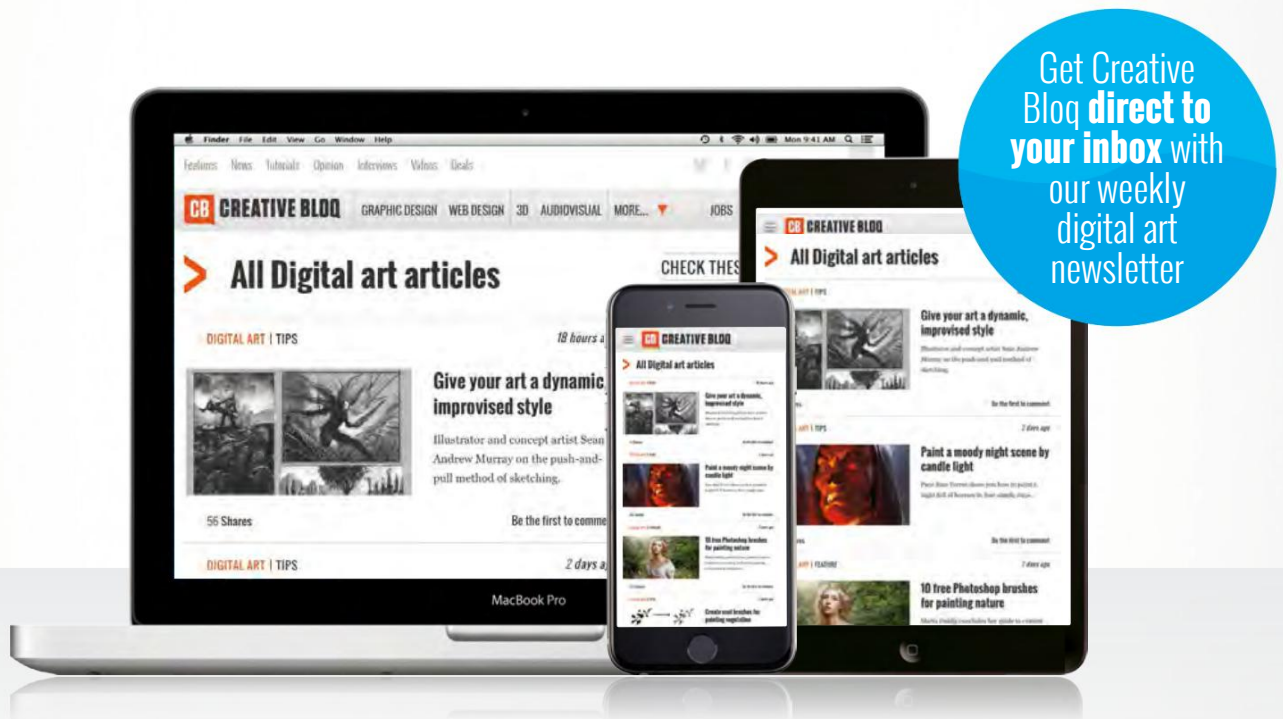
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX
Workshops

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Advice from the world's best artists

This issue:

Photoshop

PAINT A CLASSIC FILM POSTER

Andreas Bennwik shares his process for painting a retro film poster illustration, using both digital and traditional art techniques

Artist PROFILE

Andreas Bennwik

LOCATION: Sweden

Andreas has worked as a freelance illustrator for 15 years, producing advertising illustrations, film posters, record and book covers. He works both digitally and traditionally.
http://ifxm.ag/abennwi

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

For this workshop I'll paint a retro film poster-style illustration. Posters used to be painted or airbrushed on canvas or illustration board, and I'll use a technique inspired by the great Drew Struzan. It's based on airbrush painting with acrylic colours to build up the colour and shadings, and then colour pencils for rendering out the lighter parts and adding details. For this I usually use the same mediums, but here I'll be doing a mix of traditional and digital. Often an illustration needs to be changed during or after the process – working digitally makes this significantly easier.

Starting off with a traditional drawing on paper, I'll do the colouring and final rendering in Photoshop as well as adding different textures and so on. But first we need to get the idea and composition done. Each step is equally important to get the end result we want. Since it's a classic 1980s fantasy film theme, I'll make a composition of some of the famous characters from the era, keeping in mind where the text and titles are to be placed on the cover.

Researching reference pictures with the ImagineFX team is crucial as they need to be instantly recognisable. I usually come up with an idea, make a rough sketch, move on to the drawing, scan it and do the colouring in Photoshop. The colour scheme is a classic blue and orange-yellow theme that's often used in film posters.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PENCIL

This is the brush used for the details. I like to keep it at a small size.

PAINT

This is used for adding slightly larger highlights and areas covered with white or other colours.

1 Composition and rough sketch
During this early stage I think of composition, colour theme and content. Since the main words on the cover will be placed in the middle, me and the IFX team decide on a circular composition. Some film posters are built up by different elements, like a collage, and I want to recreate this same feeling. So using photo references I make a rough sketch in Photoshop.

2 Full-size drawing
I decide to make the final illustration about double the size of the cover, which enables me to bring in lots of details. I use my references to create a full-size drawing using lead pencil and a heavy-weight illustration paper. It's important to be confident at this stage and to emphasise the characteristics of the actors or creatures, as well as creating good contrast.

3 Scan and prepare the document

I scan the drawing in sections using a flat-bed A4 scanner. A setting of 600 DPI captures the details. In Photoshop I go to File>Automate>Photomerge and choose my scanned sections. This automatically merges all images and blend them together on separate layers. I create a new document (50x70cm and 300 DPI), drag the sections into it and merge them to one layer.

4 Start colouring

Now I make another layer and begin to do the colouring. This is done with the standard Soft brush, at about 10-20 per cent Opacity or less, and I carefully build up the colours. I usually start with the skin tones and lighter areas, and gradually move on to the darker parts of the painting from there.

5 Ensure my edges are sharp

I mask off certain areas with the Lasso tool to achieve sharper edges, much like airbrushing in real life. I don't build up too much colour because I still want to see the drawing underneath, which is my guide and makes everything look more alive. I'm not working with details at this stage. Rather, I'm finding the right values from studying my references.

6 Background colouring

Now I move on to the background and paint this in the same way as the characters. Later I'll add textures to make it look more alive and painted. A glow effect will surround the character group and so I leave that part lighter here. The corners and edges fade into near-black.

7 Rendering the details

Now I concentrate on the details. This is where I traditionally would have used colour pencils, so I create a lightly textured brush. After establishing a new layer I set the brush's Opacity to about 80 per cent and Size to about the same as the lines in the drawing. I usually start with areas such as eye reflections and shiny armour, since I know that they'll be the brightest parts of the painting.

8 Draw with confidence

Working through the whole image, I use a lighter version of the base colour for each part. Again, my drawing needs to be confident and in the right places, also showing how objects are affected by coloured light sources. This is time-consuming, but also rewarding because I can start to see a more finished result. For the background I increase my brush size slightly.

9 Tinting techniques

Tinting is used to help blend colours together and to develop, for example, coloured light. Create a new layer and choose Color in the Layer Mode dialog. I use the standard Soft brush and tint the character group slightly blue around the border of the blue background, while a yellow-orange on the inside blends them with the glowing crystal ball.


10 Reflections and glow

For a glow effect I use the standard Soft brush on a new layer, with Opacity set to between 20 and 40 per cent, and make soft dots where I want highlight to glow. I don't overdo this effect – less is more. On the same layer I use the Path tool to draw some reflections on the crystal ball. I convert the path to a selection and fill it with white. Once I make a layer mask, I'm able to control the Opacity by painting either black or white in the mask.
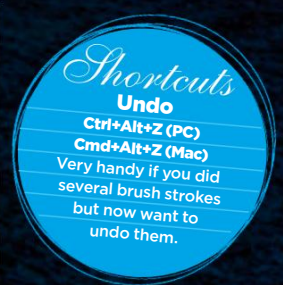

11 Who's inside the crystal ball?

I need to develop the crystal ball element for the subscribers' version of the cover, which doesn't have text on it. So I paint Jennifer Connelly from the film Labyrinth. I create it in the same way as the rest of the illustration. Again, this shows the convenience and flexibility of digital painting.
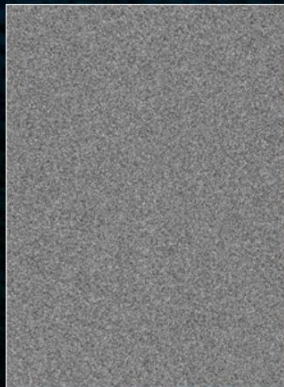
12 Add noise and textures

I make a new layer and fill it with 50 per cent grey, then add 10-15 per cent Noise. I set the layer to Overlay and adjust the Opacity slider to 30 per cent. Gaussian Blur softens the noise. The watercolour texture is made by painting black watercolour on to wet paper. When dry, I scan the texture into Photoshop, and drag it to a new layer with Layer Mode set to Multiply.

Shortcuts
Undo
Ctrl+Alt+Z (PC)
Cmd+Alt+Z (Mac)
Very handy if you did several brush strokes but now want to undo them.

13 Colour splashes

I splash some colour onto a new paper. After scanning, I open the image in Photoshop and drag it on to a new layer. I go to Image Adjustments, click Invert, then choose Screen as its Layer Mode. I go to Image Adjustments Levels and drag the black slider until only the colour splash dots are visible. Then I go to Image Adjustments Hue/Saturation and click Colorize.

14 Final adjustments

I make a new Adjustment layer and choose Hue/Saturation. I adjust any colours that need to be more or less saturated and change hues by choosing the colour in the drop-down menu and adjusting either hue or saturation. The illustration is now finished. I merge all layers, except the troublesome Gremlin, and save it as a PSD file.

PRO SECRETS

Mix traditional and digital
Because most of my illustrations are made to look painted, but at the same time need to be changeable, and mostly done quickly, I try to use the best from both digital and traditional mediums. Some things are much faster to do on paper and take too long to try and mimic digitally, but a lot of things can, of course, be much more convenient to do in Photoshop.

Photoshop

SIMPLY PAINT A GRIMM FAIRY TALE

Min Yum says planning ahead, keeping things simple and having fun are all key to creating a compelling Brothers Grimm fairy tale illustration

Artist PROFILE

Min Yum
LOCATION: Korea

Min is a freelance concept artist and illustrator from Sydney, Australia. He's worked in films and games for 10 years and currently teaches at Arteum in Seoul, Korea.
www.minart.net

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Creating a picture isn't easy. There are so many things to consider: ideas, composition, storytelling, mood, colour and rendering, to name but a few. It can easily become overwhelming.

At least in this case I have the Brothers Grimm stories to take inspiration from. The editor asks me to paint a scene from a fairy tale, and I choose The Six Swans, in which six brothers have to be released from their avian curse by their sister.

I don't have a set painting process, but I do follow a few guidelines. First, I plan ahead, and that means lots of research. Often there are going to be elements I'm not familiar with, and that means lots of sketching. I'd rather solve any problems at the start than leave them for the final stages. Furthermore, if it doesn't work as a sketch then it's not going to work as a detailed colour work.

Second, keeping it simple: design, colour, story… nice and simple! I often have to remind myself of this because it's probably the hardest one to stick to.

Finally, the great thing about digital media is how it's so forgiving of mistakes. So take advantage of it. When I get stuck I'll just go back and take a different route.

Oh, and have fun! For this workshop it's an opportunity to show a different side of fairy tales. There's something very dry, melancholy yet romantic about them. And it's these qualities that make them such an enjoyable subject to paint.

1 Sketch out your ideas
Every picture should start with a batch of sketches. It's the part where there's very little restriction and more free rein. For me this stage is very simple: I test out composition and design before things start to get heavy. If I can't work it out now then it won't work later. I try and keep it minimal and rhythmic, and only sketch the important elements.
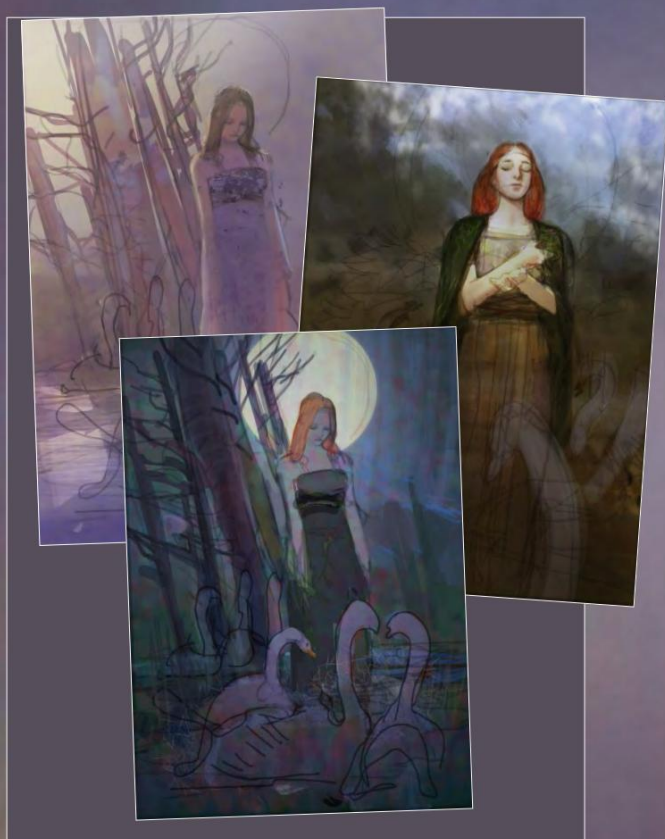
2 More basic colour sketches
These are colour explorations, done prior to this version to test out how to develop from the sketches. I find things can get very different in colour, as opposed to just lines, and these help for previewing. But they're fun too. I've gone with the direction of the first version, but the large moon feels too obvious and may not enable me to try softer colours. Bye bye moon! ➡➡

3 Setting up moods

This stage is like keynotes in music: it suggests the overall mood and colours. I usually base my colours off the simple wash to determine the range, as atmosphere has a large impact on colours. I try and assign local colours to the important elements, making sure they have enough contrast to crest visual interest. I'm not too concerned with details here. Just shapes and colours.
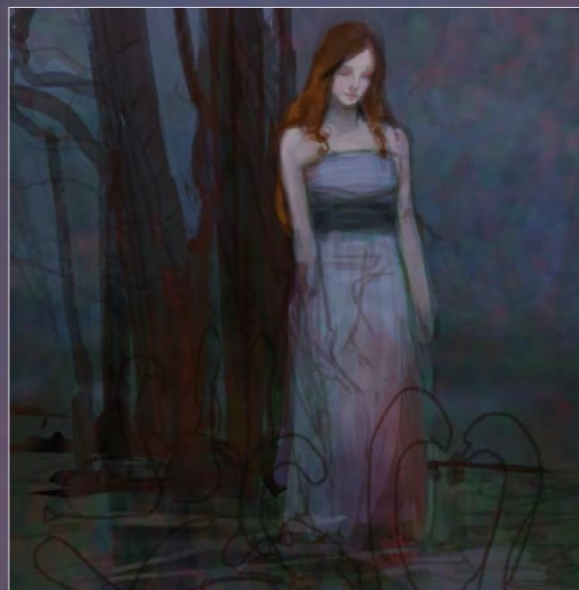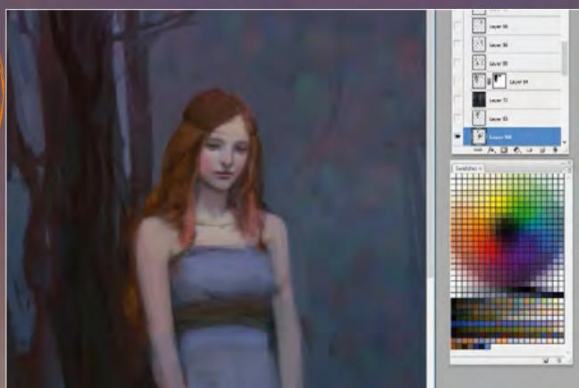
4 Depicting the girl

Of course, the character is a crucial element of the painting. She's going to tell the story, with a subtle tilt of her head, facial expression and posture. I reference Pre-Raphaelite painters to get the feel right. I don't want any direct lighting on her as it may create too much contrast. I want her to look a little more soft with very rosy cheeks.

5 Shaping the tree

I love drawing and painting trees! There's something about finding a random yet organised rhythm to painting natural objects, and trees are probably a good example of that. The trees must complement the girl, without too much distraction. So I make their vertical flows contrast with the more rounder silhouette of the girl.
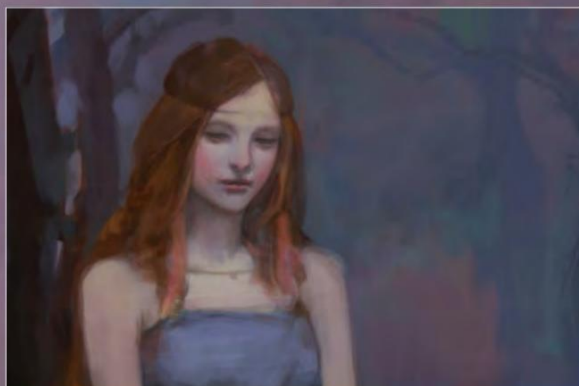
6 Adding colour

Here I decide to add bursts of colour patches to lighten up the background. I can also pick off other details such as silhouettes of the forest and define the location where she stands in the story. I find that a variation of cool colours work best here as elements recede into the background.
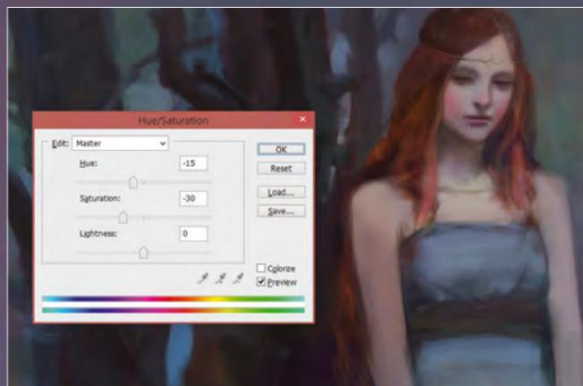
7 Adjustment layers

A great thing about digital painting is testing out variations, using simple adjustment layers. It also brings colours together. I mostly use Hue/Saturation and Color Balance adjustment layers, as they give most variation without affecting the picture too much. Color Balance can easily push a picture towards warm and cold tones, but is more experimental though.

8 The swans

Swans! I've never painted one before, so I spend a few hours gathering references. I've got six to paint. I only go to rough in the patches of lighter colours that will soon be swans. I also add a bit of warmth towards the bottom of the painting, hoping it might help with shaping out the birds.

PRO SECRETS

Dual view

Photoshop enables you to have multiple windows open at the same time. I have a main working window zoomed in for the details and another window opened at 25 per cent zoomed out, so I can check how each brush stroke affects the overall picture. You can open a duplicate window by going to Window> Arrange>New window for... (your file's name).
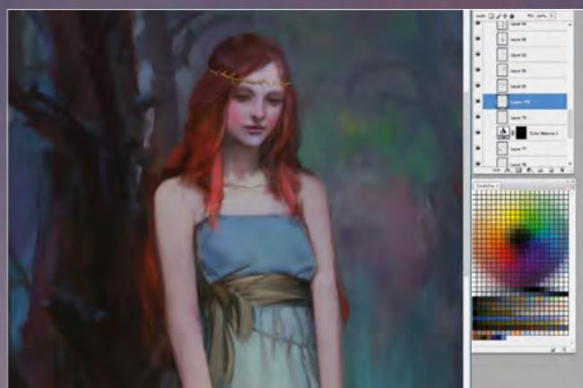
9 Detailing the character

My princess looks a bit short, mostly because I want her to be ankle deep in water initially. But that hasn't really been obvious enough. So to solve this I simply extend her dress and then she won't look too short. I want her gestures and overall look to be sad but calm.

10 Swans again

In the sketch I had the two swans in the foreground, but I realise there's too much white and it draws too much attention away from the princess. I move some of the swans to the back – I only need to suggest them. Even after doing this there's still too much white in the foreground. So I darken it a bit and reduce the contrast.

Shortcuts

Duplicate in place
Cmd+J (PC)
Ctrl+J (Mac)
This pastes into the same place you've copied it from.

11 Add water

I know water's going to be tricky. I haven't given much thought to it until now. It's going to be very restricted because most elements are already in place, not to mention the contrast issue from the previous step. I find this stage the most difficult, because it's time to tidy up the loose ends while keeping the rendering consistent. With the water in place, it's almost there.
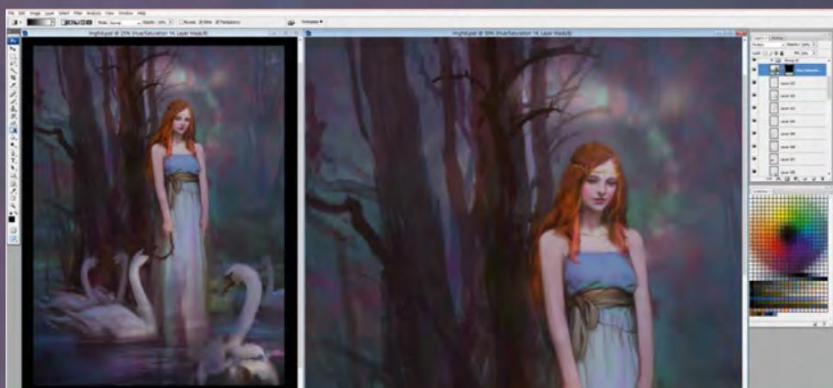
12 Loose ends – begone!

I'm undecided about the colour of the girl's hair – there's always going to be something that bothers you. The tree also seems too busy and chaotic. I go back, to almost the start, to bring back the simpler trees that are hopefully less distracting. I add a slight glow around the character's head and make more colour adjustments. Then I tidy up and finish.

Photoshop

HOW TO DEVELOP HUE AND LIGHTING

Lixin Yin shows how gaining control of hue can be crucial for creating a harmonious image

Light source

Though it's not very obvious in this composition, the light source comes from the top. We need to think about the whole room's space. The room is like a box and all the objects in the space are affected by light. When there's light, importantly there will also be shadows cast by the light.

After posting this piece on Facebook I was surprised to receive a lot more attention from fellow artists than usual. In my spare time I do a lot of studies like this. Some are more focused on lighting, others on structures and styles.

I like to train myself in different aspects of art, and practise them through the mediums I use, such as pencils, watercolour and oil painting, even 3D software. To me all art formats are a way to present my skills, and the tools are there to help me do it. Lately I've picked up Cinema 4D and SketchUp again, after a long time without touching them, and have been using them to paint more recent pieces, though for this one I just used Photoshop.

Artist
PROFILE

Lixin Yin
LOCATION: China

The freelance concept artist designs for films and games, and enjoys working on his personal projects in his spare time.
http://ifxm.ag/ylix

Adding depth

Here I needed to spend some time treating the depth behind the characters by adding some pillars. The table also has objects on it as well, to balance out the objects in the foreground. I've added some candles in the background, but I make sure they don't compete with the foreground candles.

Focal point

The table in the foreground is the focal point of the piece. When almost finished I'll use some Smudge tools to give it an oil painting finish. It's in front of the characters, so I need to add a little bit of texture to extend the top corner of it, making it feel closer.

How I create...
THE RIGHT LEVEL OF HUE

Lightsource

1 Space and lighting

I want one or maybe several light sources radiating from the top of the composition, gradually dropping to hit the space in the middle. Then other figures will appear as silhouettes. For the table, I think about how light strikes its surface and cast shadows. I also consider the hue of the figures and the intensity of light – I don't want light like a modern fluorescent lamp.

2 Controlling the painting's hue

Hue is one of the priorities of a painting and the effect the light has on it can unify a composition. The character, props, the surface under the light, cast shadows – they all have a colour, and the light will affect it. Only the middle values will retain the richest colour. I don't add highlights because they may prove distracting to the viewer lose. There should be only one bright area.

3 Creating detail

Next I use small brushes to touch up the painting's details, then I crosshatch and treat the highlights. Finally, I use texture brushes to enrich the composition, with some special effects such as glowing lights. I pay attention to details, but I try to get the right balance. Too much and you can risk scattering the viewer's focus around the painting. Too little and people mightn't be attracted to it.

Artist insight
ENSURE YOUR RPG IS FULL OF LIFE

Simon Dubuc, character designer and concept artist, shows how to concept and develop memorable characters for a role-playing game

Artist PROFILE

Simon Dubuc
LOCATION: Canada

Simon has always been a gamer, and his passion for digital art led him to a career in game development. He's worked on titles such as Splinter Cell: Conviction and Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions.
http://ifxm.ag/s-dubuc

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Role-playing games have long been a part of my life. What drew me to them was always the same thing: likeable characters. For this project, done at Brainstorm School, I wanted to flesh out a world through its inhabitants and their various cultures. I also wanted my heroes to be an interesting mix of these cultures.

But good character design isn't just about cool outfits and weapons. It's also about getting your audience to respond emotionally to your characters. You want their personality to read, their background story to shine through the design. In this workshop I'll give you my tips on how to quickly generate characters in order to make your world come alive.

I'll also explain how I approach key designs such as heroes and villains, and how to make them relatable to create interest. Making people care about our characters is crucial in any game or film, whether they're humans, creatures or objects. This is as important as making them look good – and it's not easy – but there is a recipe you can follow…

1 KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DRAWING

Gather reference! Build a mood board for whatever it is you're designing. It can be composed of anything that inspires you for this particular character or series. Yet before you even start sketching, write down a one-line description for each character. This forces you to decide on the most important aspects of the design you're about to draw. For this project I also used keywords for every faction I was designing. Words like rust, steam and revolution helped me stay inspired and consistent as I came up with variations on a theme.

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© iStock.com/dawncycling

© iStock.com/tr3gi

2 A READABLE SILHOUETTE

My favourite technique for generating many concepts quickly is to use silhouettes. I don't use this for the important characters such as heroes because I think pure line drawing is more appropriate, but for secondary characters it's a great technique. I use photobashing for my rough designs and then tweak them to achieve clean silhouettes. Once I'm satisfied they read well and are interesting as an ensemble, I start resolving the designs with line on top.

3 THE BENEFITS OF WORKING IN BULK

Working on several designs at a time has many advantages. It means that you can focus on one task to get it done faster, enables you to compare your designs at each stage for consistency, and gives you a good number of WIPs to show your art director instead of three to four finished pieces. I start by getting all my silhouettes working properly, then apply all of the line work, before moving on to colour. I like to colour the whole set at once, so I can keep track of my colour proportions.

> 66 Good character design is about getting your audience to respond emotionally to your characters 99

4 IMAGINE DAILY LIFE

Try to envision who you'd meet while walking through a city in your game. What do the passersby look like? How about the street vendors and the artisans? For example, here I wanted to create a technologically advanced society based on feudal Japan. I imagined floating rickshaws, high-tech swordsmiths and monks, enhanced sumo wrestlers, and so on. By inventing unique customs and cultural traits to direct my designs, it was easier to come up with interesting character designs that would make the viewer curious.

PRO SECRETS

Fundamentals are key

You can never hone the basics enough. Anatomy, perspective, composition, lighting and colour will always be your key tools, and working on them will significantly improve your work. Along with form language and other touchstones of design, this is the key to creating successful entertainment art as a career.

5 MAKE YOUR FACTIONS COMPLEMENTARY

Factions are omnipresent in games, so make sure your factions have enough contrasting elements, such as technology levels, customs and racial traits to make them unique. For example, if you have an industrial, technocratic empire, it can be interesting to oppose it to a primitive, spiritual tribe. This contrast can create interesting situations when your important characters, who come from these vastly different environments, start interacting. ➤➤

6 USE ARCHETYPES

Let's talk about main characters. When designing heroes and villains, one of your most powerful tools is archetypes. These are iconic representations of cultural entities such as the vengeful lone warrior or the wise old wizard. You certainly want to put your twist on it, but a strong archetype will take your character far. For this project, my protagonist is a young revolutionary leader. I used a strong historical figure (Che Guevara) as a main inspiration, and made him the ragtag underdog I was looking for.

PRO SECRETS

Get to the good stuff

If you run into an art block, try throwing your first ideas on the page as early as possible. It might not look great, but it gets the low-hanging fruit out of the way and means you can quickly get to the good stuff.

7 FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

An important thing to ask yourself when adding something to your design is: does this contribute to what I want to convey? Does this element help the viewer understand my character's personality, does it suggest her background? If the answer is no, it may be better to leave it out. Think of what your character does every day; is her physique adapted to these tasks? If not, how does she compensate for it? Let the shapes you use tell the story you want to tell, rather than distract your audience from it.

8 BE PROVOCATIVE

During my time studying at Concept Design Academy, the great designer Carlo Arellano taught me the importance of being provocative. This doesn't necessarily mean using gore or sexuality in each of your designs. It can simply mean making your audience slightly uncomfortable; perhaps surprise them with an unexpected contrast.

For instance, instead of the classic dragon, why not make yours a refined scholar? How about a robot with a code of honour? Furthermore, giving your characters a weakness will make them more memorable: a phobia, an obsession, a physical handicap. You can turn these into interesting assets in your designs.

9 PROPORTIONS

Don't underestimate the power of proportions, because if your proportions aren't correct, everything else falls apart. This is also applicable to design. When sketching your character, you should include a variety of big, medium and small shapes. This has many advantages: you can use big shapes to lead the eye towards important areas, allow the design to breathe, and create contrast which in turn generates interest. ➤➤

❝ Let the shapes you use tell the story, rather than distract the audience from it ❞

FROM LINE TO RENDER

I love designing with line because corrections are extremely fast. My first drawing is never the best, so I usually do a few variations of important characters to get the more expected stuff out of the way. Once I'm satisfied with the design, I decide on a lighting scheme and start sculpting using form and cast shadows. Then I use different layer styles to roughly colour the piece (I like Hard Light mode since it allows for value adjustments). Once this is done I finish the piece with materials, extra lighting and special effects.

1 Visualise the design

The sketch phase is key. Keep in mind that no amount of rendering will save a bad drawing. Start loose. Refine your design until most distracting elements are gone and only the relevant remains. Be mindful of proportions and composition, but also of the emotions you want to convey.

2 Block and colour

Start rendering by blocking in your shadow shapes and turning your forms. Cast shadows are a powerful rendering tool, so don't be afraid to go sharp and dark. I usually colour my elements with Color or Hard Light layers – anything that can get me a quick rough pass.
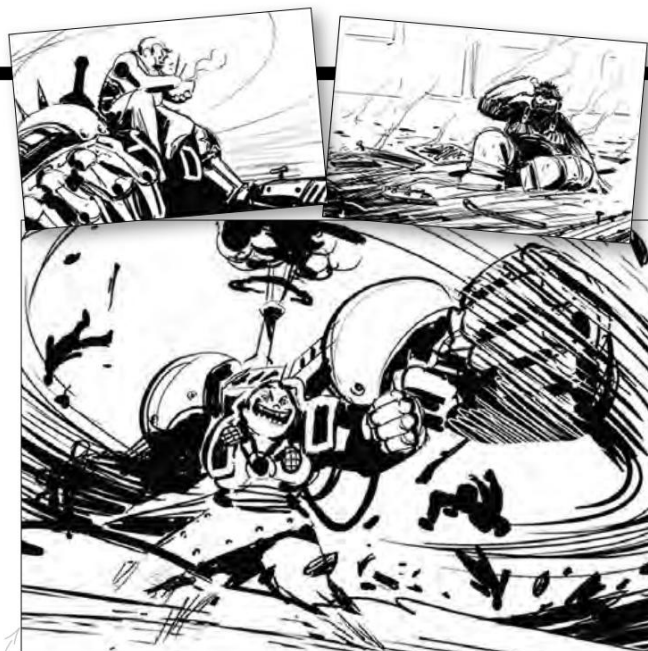
3 Bring your character to life

Finally it's time to make your rendering come to life. Use reference for your materials and look for opportunities. Maybe your character's clothes have a reflective pattern, or perhaps their trousers are caked with mud. Use techniques such as subsurface scattering, a fresnel effect, sharp reflections, rim lighting and lost-and-found edges.

Organic headpiece points to a close relationship with nature.

Giant pipe is associated with shamanism.

Glowing mushroom conveys mysticism.

Tattoos indicate a tribal culture.

Yellow garments suggest a monk background, with its inherent wisdom.

11 DYNAMIC KEYSHOTS

Keyshots serve to showcase your characters in a way that makes the viewer care about them. You want to highlight an important trait and present it in a dynamic way in order to create a response. Try to think of the most meaningful aspect of your character: are they highly spiritual? Fearless in battle? Choose a simple story and tell it clearly. Be mindful of the amount of information you give, because trying to say too much might confuse the viewer.
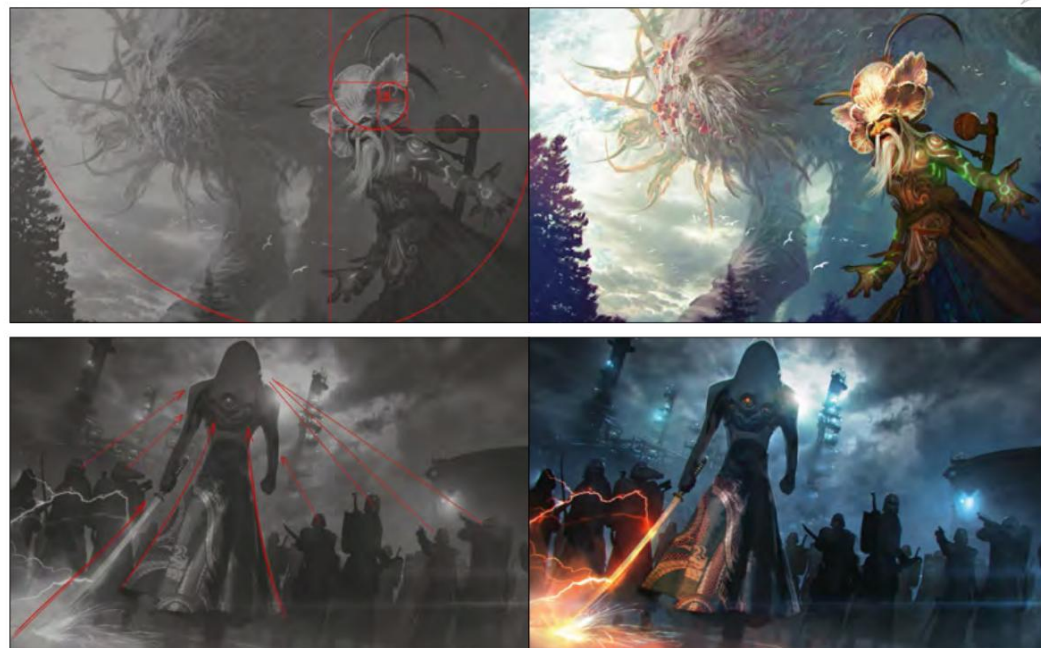

10 TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Just like the abstract shapes and physical traits of your characters, their equipment defines them. Make sure you infuse personality into the inanimate parts of your designs. Equipment should reflect the culture and level of technology of the owner, as well as show the hardships or privilege of their upbringing. The different cultures of the world are an endless source of inspiration; use them to build a mental library you can draw from. If a character is to be animated, it's important to be mindful of how the equipment will be used and how things will move around.

12 BUILD A STRONG COMPOSITION

I believe composition is the most important aspect of a keyshot. Design your image so that it leads the eye to the important parts. Want people to look at the face? Put the most contrast there. Have lines converge toward it. Pay attention to the rule of thirds: divide your image into thirds and put elements of interest where lines intersect. You can use the golden spiral to great effect; try experimenting with it at various angles. And keep in mind that a character's line of sight will send the viewer's eye in that direction – you can use that to your advantage.

13 MIX IT UP WITH YOUR CREATURE DESIGNS

Creatures are everywhere: in popular culture, folklore and mythology, but also in real life. Often the wildlife programmes you see on the BBC are weirder than sci-fi. Use these relatable elements in your designs. Mix a siren with an octopus: you get Ursula from the Little Mermaid. In this project, my villains are mutated religious fanatics. The first one uses elements from an angel, a butterfly and a Roman emperor, while the second borrows from a horn of plenty, a shellfish and a termite queen.

14 VARY YOUR MATERIALS

Creatures are often unclothed, in which case material variation becomes crucial. It can be a great tool for creating interest while keeping your shapes simple and iconic. Try to be as accurate as possible when indicating a material: how does it behave under certain sighting scenarios? A good way to get a grasp on this is to do studies from photos; you can also learn a lot by observing how real-life materials react, or use a 3D program to play around with surface parameters. Also check out Scott Robertson's book How to Render for excellent information on this.

Rubber   Metal flake paint

Lava   Chrome

Gummy   Wax

> **Often the wildlife programmes that you see on the BBC channels are weirder than science fiction**

Photoshop & Cinema 4D

COMPOSE A FUTURISTIC ENVIRONMENT

Pablo Carpio develops a clean, futuristic design using photobashing techniques and basic 3D rendering

Artist PROFILE

Pablo Carpio
LOCATION: Spain

After recently graduating with a fine arts degree, illustrator and concept artist Pablo is busy building up his freelance career in the digital art industry.
http://ifxm.ag/pabcar

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Explaining my painting process is both a challenge and fun, but everything is easier when you can do something in your comfort zone! So when I was asked to paint a futuristic illustration, I decided to depict a huge building using an epic perspective to emphasise its size, while trying to maintain that clean and aseptic style that appeals to me. Indeed, I'm inspired by the look of video games such as Mass Effect and Mirror's Edge.

For this illustration, I'll use basic 3D modelling and rendering techniques, and pass on some tips for using photo textures. It's important to understand the value of time when developing different ideas for clients or even yourself. It's for this reason that photobashing and 3D composition can be especially useful tools when putting together concept art and illustrations. I'll try also to explain the basics of colour and light during my painting process, and reveal

how composition can make or break a dynamic image.

My aim with this workshop is to give you ideas to develop not only a futuristic design, but anything you want. Try to take in all the steps and tips for your next work, because it's more about my workflow and approach than the final result. Never forget that your work is meant to be seen, so try to think outside of the box, and make something new and eye-catching. And enjoy painting, too!
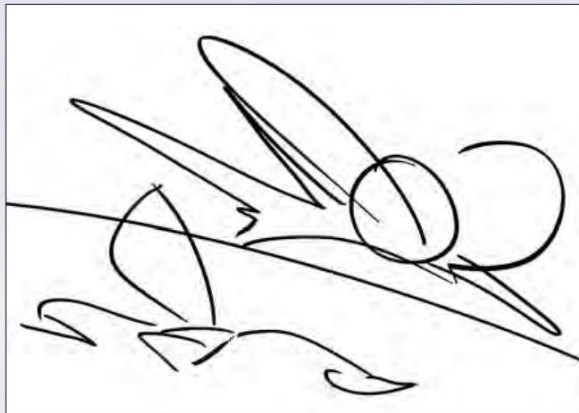
1 Rough sketch

I begin by brainstorming different compositions and shapes. It doesn't take more than a couple of minutes per sketch. So after deciding that I'm going to design a large building, I think about painting a large structure in the middle of an ocean with a sailboat in the foreground.
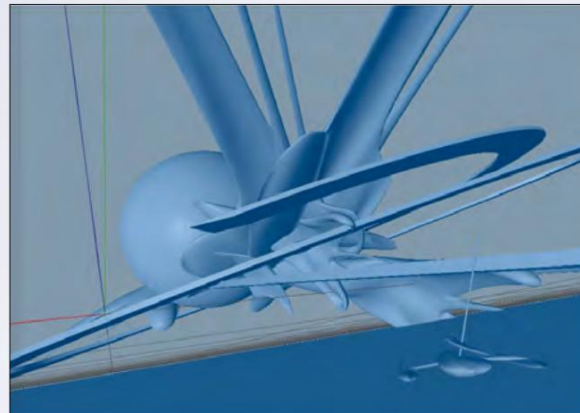
2 3D composition

I jump into Cinema 4D to make a simple blockmesh. I want to make a building with dynamic shapes to make the eye travel through the image. I start with a sphere as the core and some rings and deformed random shapes, so it looks like a busy city. It's the same process with the sailboat: just a couple of deformed spheres. I use a camera to define the depth and angle.
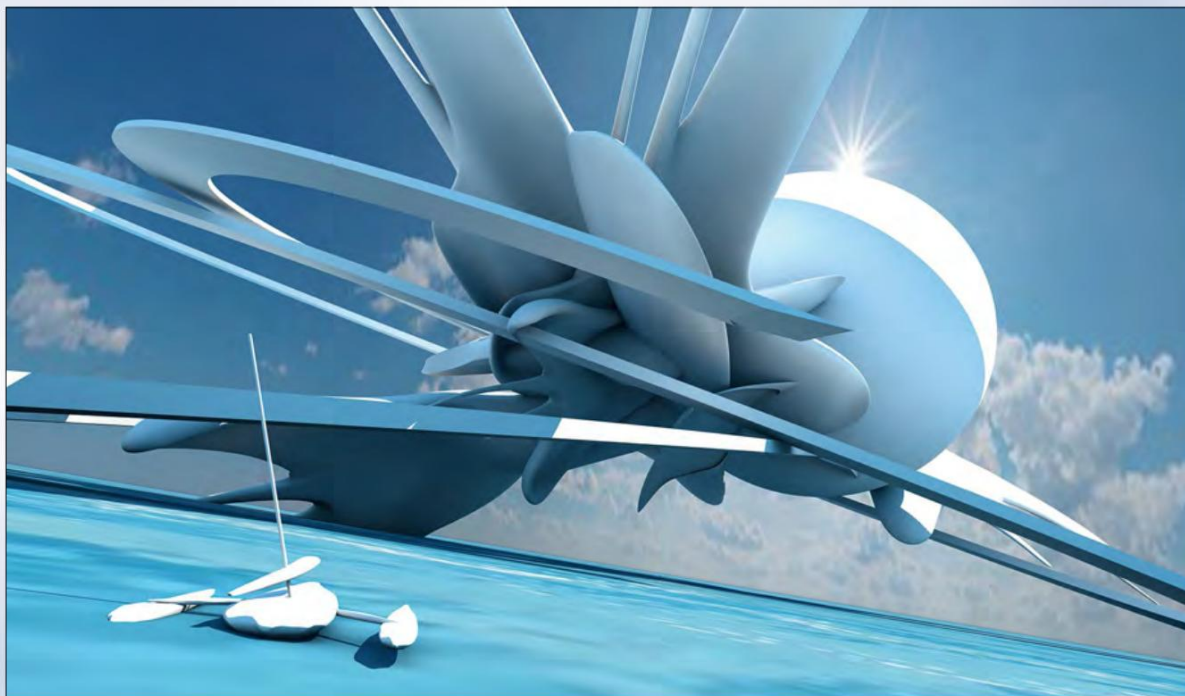
3 Rendering in 3D

The last step in 3D is to apply colour and a light source. The shadows are affected by the colour of the environment and so these become blue, while the light is behind the building, which produces a rim light that illuminates the sailboat. This step enables me to quickly recreate the perspective and the projection of the light.
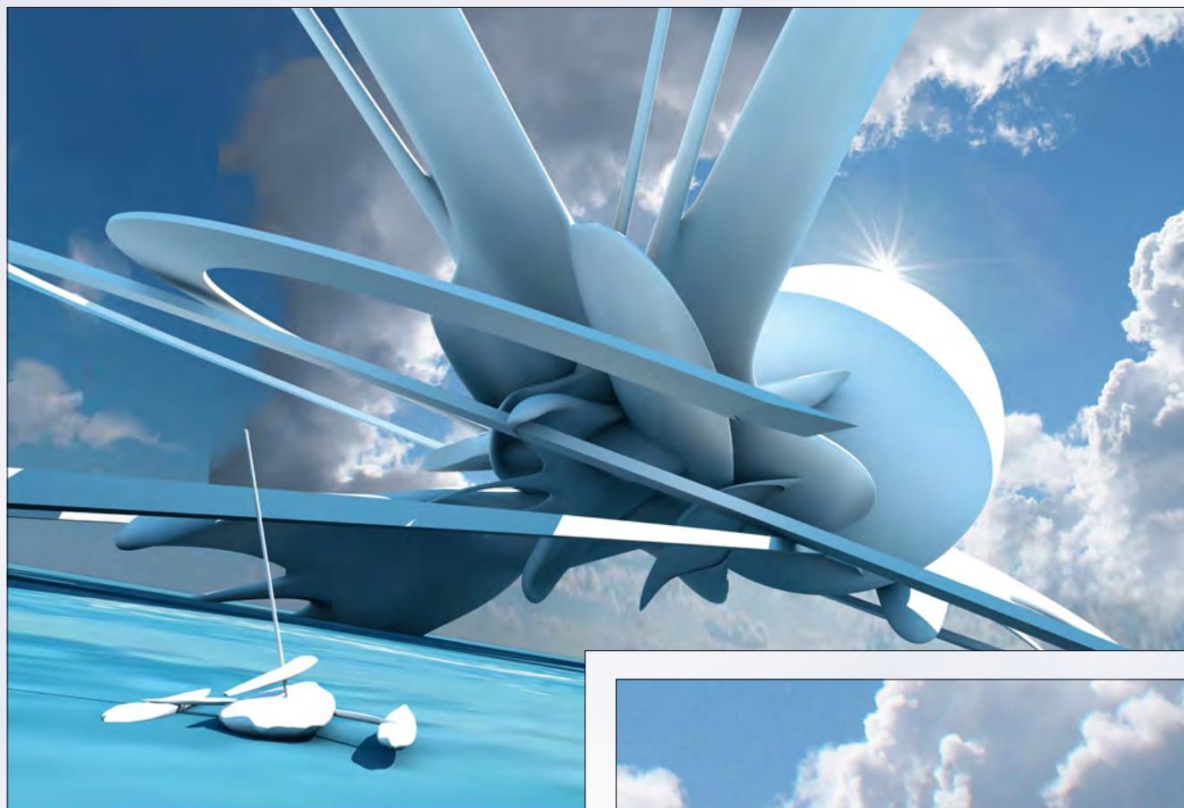
4 The background

Once I'm happy with the composition, I take the image into Photoshop. I start by designing the background. I used an HDRI image for the sky in the 3D stage, so I'll treat this as a base to photobash with cloud textures. I always try not to forget about the light direction in the textures I use: these have to match my main light source.
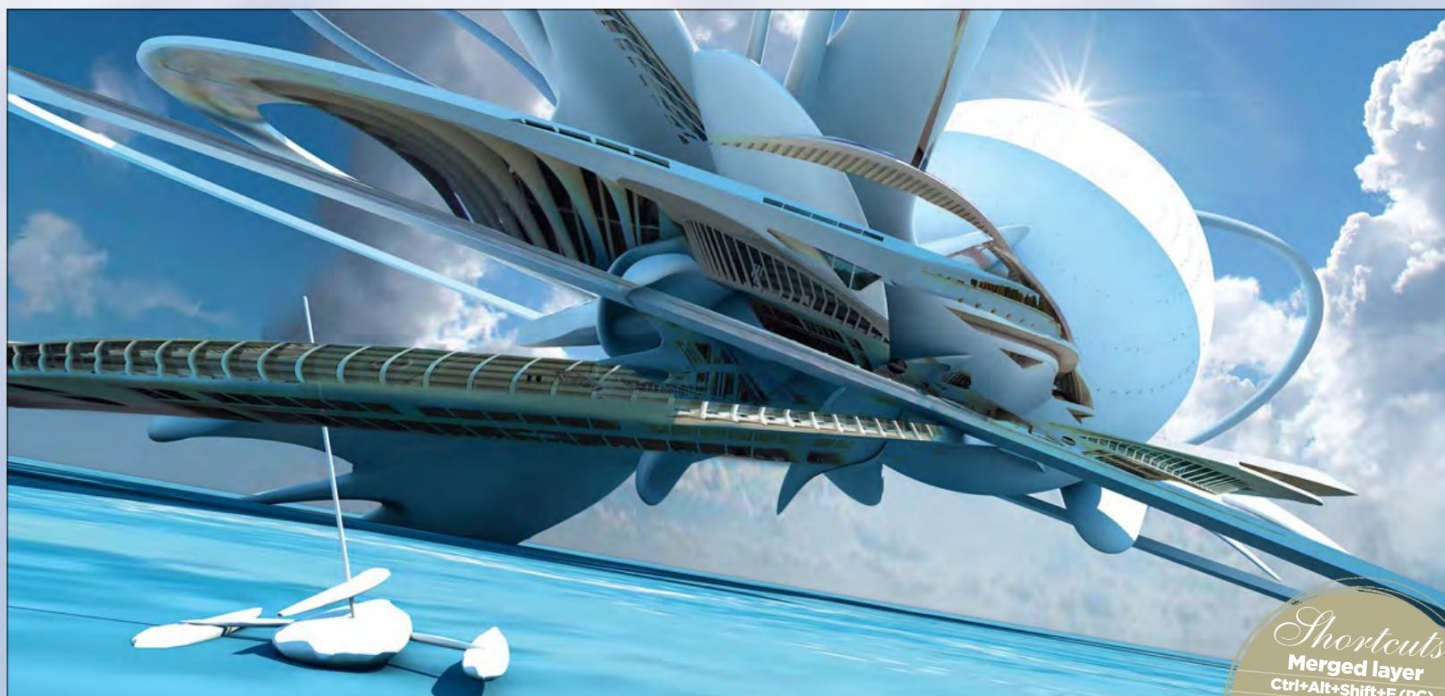
5 Photobashing the building

Next I mix textures to find the right shapes. For this futuristic building, I apply some photographs of the City of Arts and Sciences, in Spain. I use different photos, changing the Layer Blend modes to Darken, Lighten, Multiply and so on, before deforming them to produce an interesting design. I always control the perspective and light direction when I use photos in my art.

Shortcuts
Merged layer
Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E (PC)
Cmd+Opt+Shift+E (Mac)
Merge all layers. Useful for the last steps of colour correction, focus and film grain.
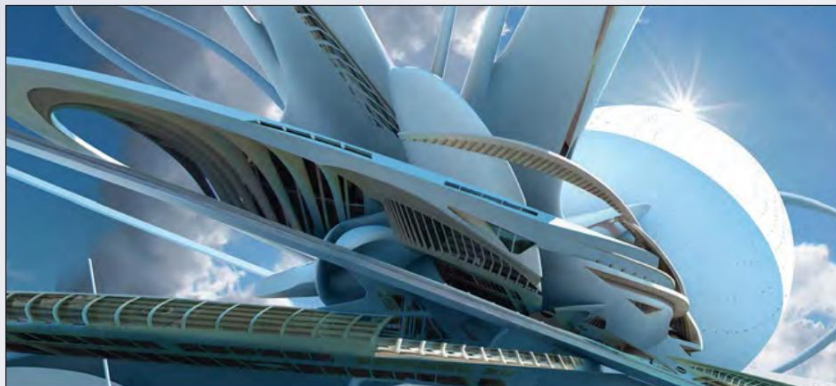
6 Defining the details

After the photobashing stage, I continue painting over the textures to define the details and retouch some parts to try and produce some interesting shapes and colours. Normally when using photographs I need to change the values, tone and colour balance of each of them to make them match, so I use this step to fix visual mismatches.

7 Atmospheric perspective

I've finished the building design, so I select the layer that comprises its shape and the ocean. I make a mask with a solid blue colour that's similar to the sky and reduce the Opacity until it matches the atmospheric depth I have in mind. Increasing the Opacity will mean an object is larger and further away. Reducing Opacity means an object is closer to the camera and smaller.

PRO SECRETS

Be bold

Great things always happen outside of your comfort zone. Think shrewdly about your money, your time and your company. Think about attending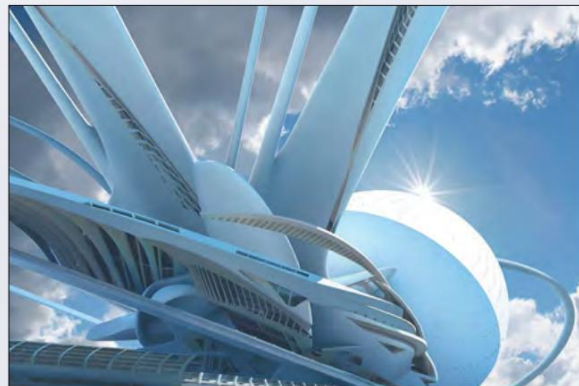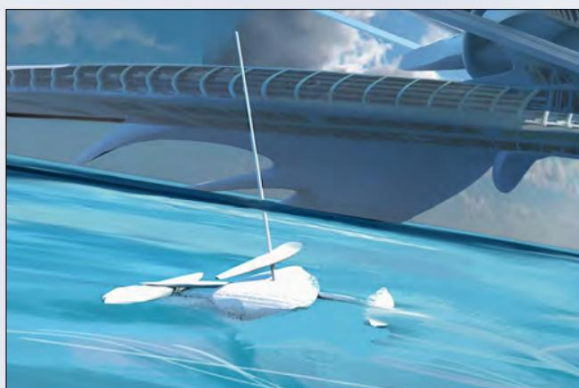 a couple of international conventions to meet artists and recruiters, instead of paying for a private tutor. Think about your schedule and try to see where you can save time and dedicate it to improving as fast as you can. And most of all, avoid people who tell you that you can't do something – it's because they couldn't!

8 Painting the ocean

I make a new layer and separate the boat and the ocean from the rest of the composition, then do a rough painting to add some depth and some foam texture to the water. I add darker colours to some parts, to achieve depth. And I draw some lines over the whole surface to increase that feeling and emphasise the perspective.
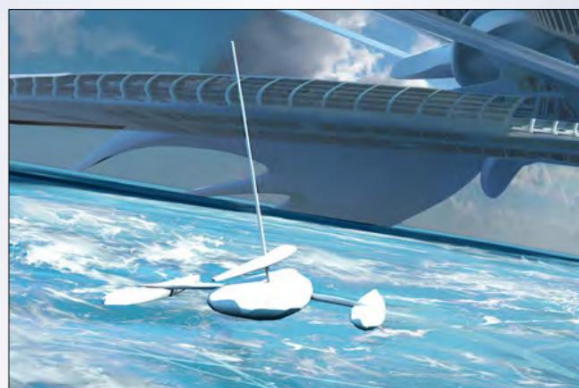
9 Foam and waves

To quickly make the foam and waves texture, I use photographs of water taken from above. These are easy to wrap and deform to achieve the correct perspective. I use them with the Lighten blend mode to eliminate dark parts and leave only bright elements. This means I can see the layer under it, which enhances the feeling of 'transparent depth'.
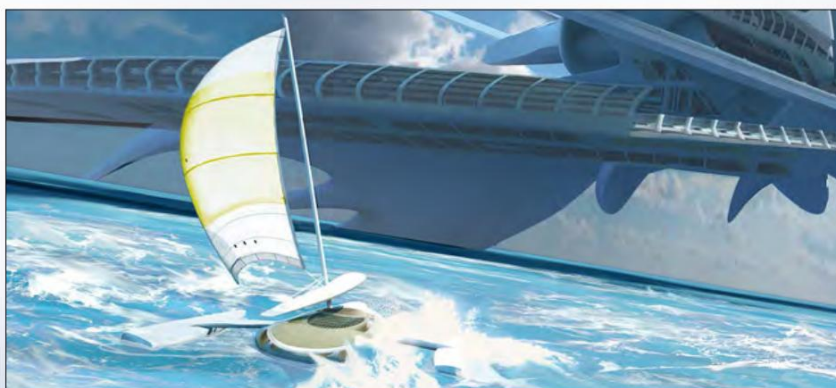
10 Detailing the sailboat

The method I use to paint the sailboat is similar to that use to paint the building (steps 4 and 5). I start by finding photographs that support the design and I apply them while looking for interesting shapes. I continue with an overpainting to define the forms and colour, and merge it with the water, with more waves and foam textures.

11 Colour correction and light reflection

I use the Color Balance and Levels tools to edit the general colours of the image. This doesn't have to be a radical stage: normally a small tweak is enough to merge the colour palette and make it feel consistent. In addition, I add some reflection to the lighter parts using a Soft brush on a low Opacity.

12 Depict the aircraft's trail

I want to make the image more dynamic and increase the feeling of depth, so I decide to paint a smoke trail over the ocean with an aircraft approaching the city. This also adds a hint of storytelling. I draw a circle with a cloud texture brush and wrap it to give it the form of the perspective. I also use the Smudge tool to deform the existing clouds and make some sky trails.

13 Small details

This step is something to bear in mind, but also to be careful with. I introduce a couple of details, such as some low clouds under the building and some birds flying near the city. It's good to add some life to the painting, but I always take care not to add too much useless detail at this point because it can distract from the focal points.
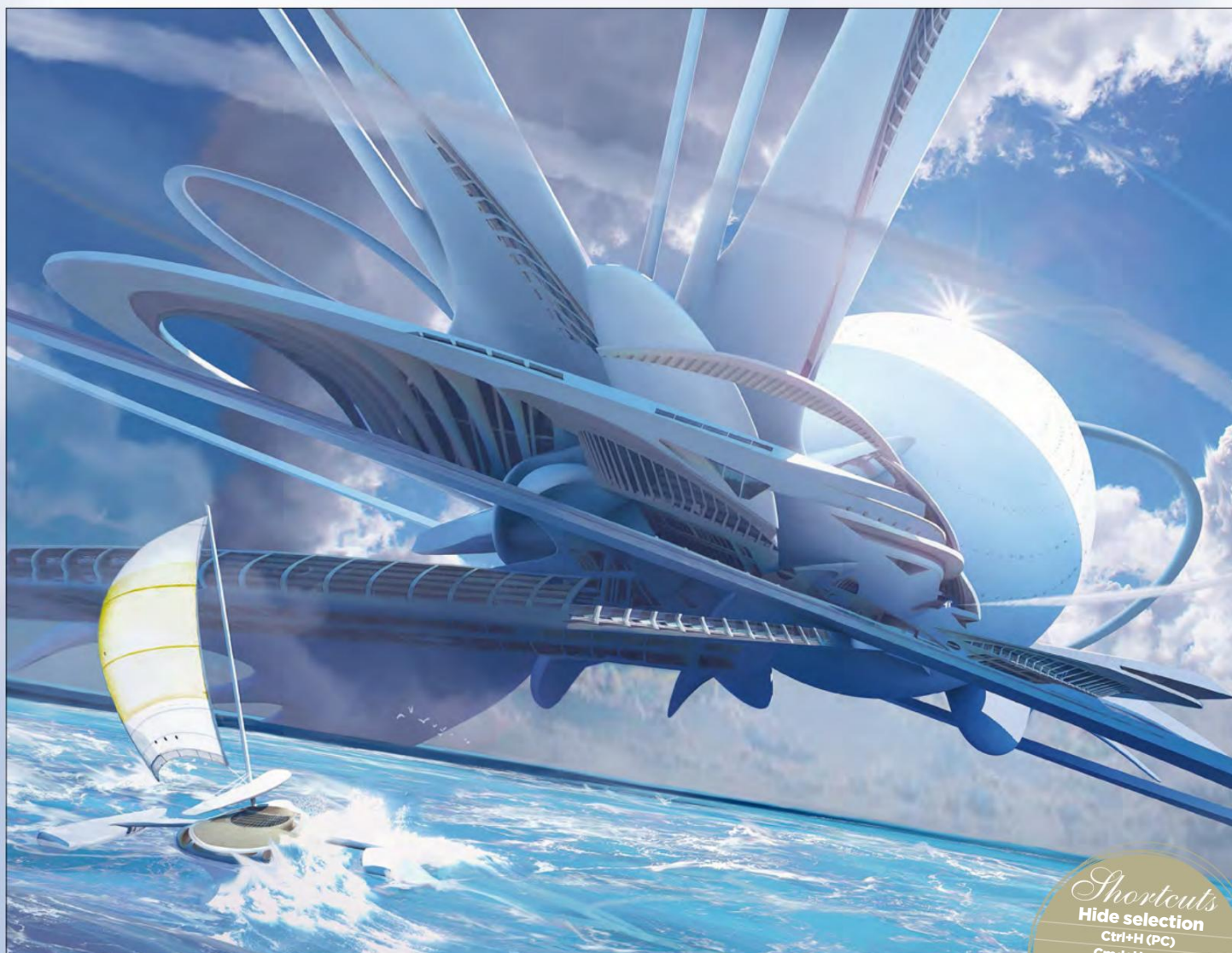
14 Finishing the piece

Now that the illustration is finished, my last step consists of enhancing the focus to keep the edges sharp and all the shapes clean. After that, I check and correct the colours and add a very soft Color filter to the whole composition. Finally, I add some film grain to tie everything together and emulate that perfect digital colour look. ●

Shortcuts
Hide selection
Ctrl+H (PC)
Cmd+H (Mac)
When using the Lasso tool or a mask, hide the 'marching ants' line to see more clearly.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX Reviews

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…

7 PRODUCTS ON TEST

HARDWARE

90 iPad Pro
Apple's latest iPad has a 12.9-inch Retina screen. We find out if the device is worth the extra expense.

SOFTWARE

93 Paintstorm Studio 1.5
This software is a dream for artists who want to customise brushes, but are there too many options?

93 Pixelmator 2.2
We get our hands on a powerful photo-editing app that paints exceedingly well, too.

TRAINING

95 Creating a Sci-Fi Alleyway
Environment artist Devon Fay shows what it takes to craft a realistic city scene inspired by Blade Runner and Star Wars.

BOOKS

96 Further reading
Coverama: Alternative Worlds; Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel; Heaven's Hell: the Art of Anthony Jones.

RATINGS EXPLAINED 🖌🖌🖌🖌🖌 Magnificent　🖌🖌🖌🖌 Great　🖌🖌🖌 Good　🖌🖌 Poor　🖌 Atrocious
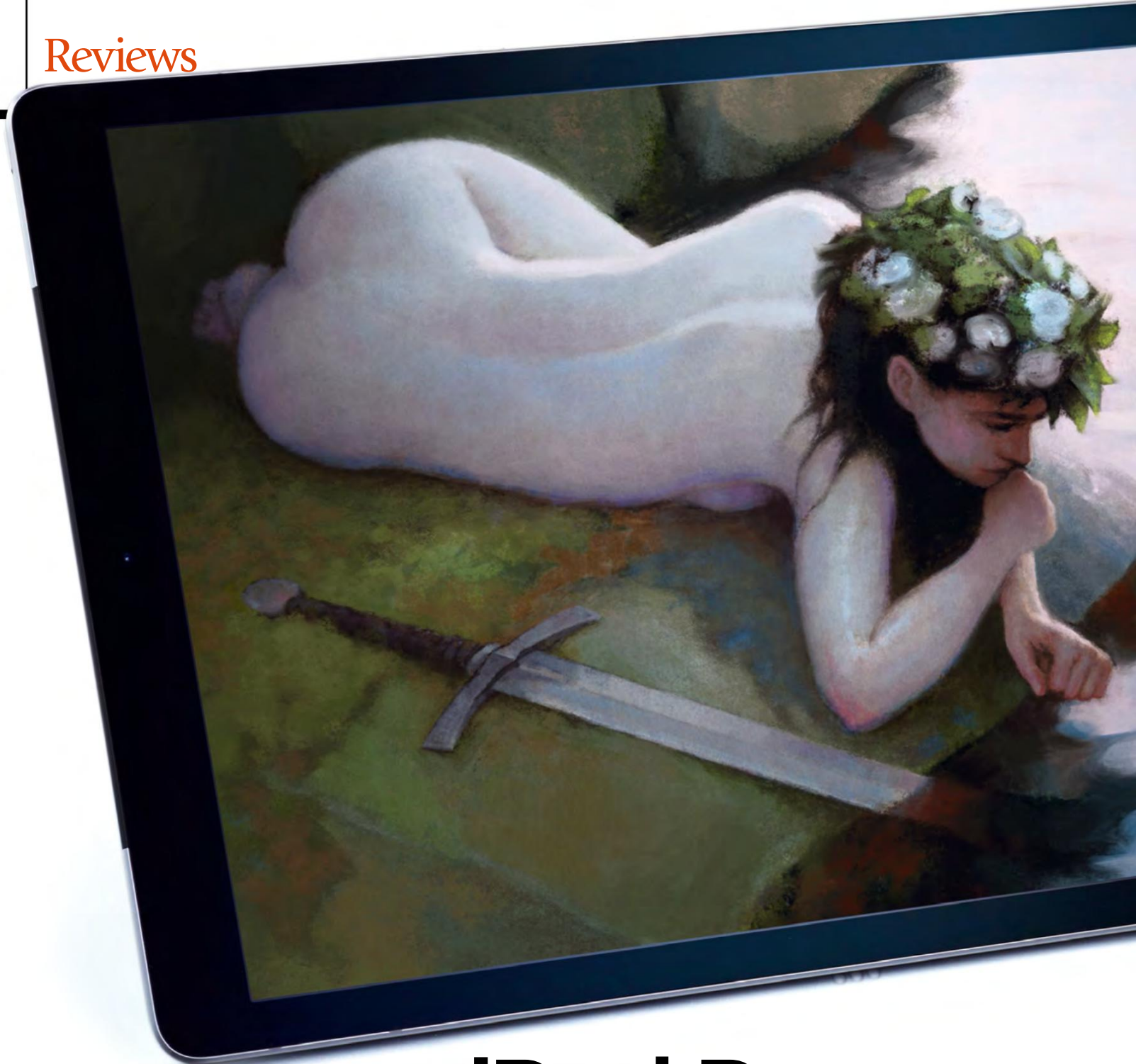
The new iPad Pro is designed and marketed as a viable alternative to your laptop – but most artists will want to purchase a stand, too.

iPad Pro

TURNING PRO Apple's new iPad is aimed at digital creatives, but is the extra screen size worth the money?

Price £679 **Company** Apple **Web** www.apple.com

When first lifting the iPad Pro a couple of things become apparent. First, and in predictable Apple style, it's a solid-feeling device. It's not heavy, but feels substantial at three quarters of a kilo – in a reassuring way, rather than cumbersome. Secondly, it's big. Almost comically so.

The effects of its size soon wear off, although the benefit of spending the extra on a good stand will be evident. Which raises another issue. A device this size, aimed at the pro market, really doesn't fulfil its brief without the Pencil. And this brings the sub-£700 pound price closer to a thousand. But even with the extra costs, it's still decent value compared to other options on the market, such as the Cintiq Companion 2 (£2,000) or Microsoft's Surface Pro 4 (starting at £749).

The new iPad Pro has all the connectivity options and sleekness of design we've come to expect from Apple.

Artists and designers will probably want to splash out on a Pencil, too, but despite the cost the Pro is still decent value compared to other options.

66 The extra screen real estate makes a huge difference to the artist 99

It's interesting to note that Apple has kept its Pro offering based on iOS. This limits the applications available, but ensures the options on offer feel slick. This may become a blessing for users, as the development community for iOS apps moves rapidly and responsively.

There are existing tools that serve the creative markets, from digital painting to video editing and even 3D sculpting. These feel great in use, with the extra screen real estate making a huge difference, Pencil or not. Procreate and SketchBook both run flawlessly, and when paired with Apple's keyboard stand and Pencil, feel like a real alternative to a laptop.

One design oddity is the charging of the Pencil. Although charging on the go is a good option in theory, having the length of the Pencil protruding

from the iPad's port is ungainly and far too easy to snag, risking damage to either or both devices. It's a useful option when stationary, though.

As a first foray into what could be a new market, the iPad Pro is promising. Existing iPad users may not feel the need to upgrade, instead looking at the mini or Air. But for professional wanting the creative abilities they're used to from a workstation or full OS, it's an exciting development.

The key to the iPad Pro's success will be when developers have had time to exploit the iOS and release the tools, enabling creatives to be truly portable, working with tools that are powerful, adaptable and productive. Apple could be the perfect delivery system for the next wave of content creation tools. ◾

DETAILS

Features
- ◼ 12.9-inch Retina display
- ◼ A9x processor
- ◼ Four high-fidelity speakers
- ◼ 6.9mm thick
- ◼ Up to 10 hour battery life
- ◼ Up to 128GB storage
- ◼ Wi-Fi
- ◼ Cellular model
- ◼ M9 motion coprocessor
- ◼ 8MP iSight camera
- ◼ 1080p HD video recording (30 fps)

Rating
✎ ✎ ✎ ✎ ✎

ARTIST INTERVIEW

DAVE BRASGALLA

The artist reveals why and how he uses Apple's latest tablet

What drove your decision to buy an iPad Pro?
I've loved finger-painting on the iPad from the very first model, but as I return more to traditional art as well as digital, I've found myself craving that feeling of a pen or pencil in my hand. There's a definite difference in mark-making between using one's finger and using a stylus. The combination of the larger screen Pro with the promise of the Pencil was irresistible. I knew after watching the introduction presentation for the Pencil I'd be getting the pair.

Is there anything else you use the iPad for?
I sometimes prop it up and use it to display reference next to my easel when I'm painting traditionally. But I always worry I'm going to smear it with paint. I've used it a few times at life-drawing classes, which was fun. Although I prefer a simple sketchpad and pencil there to keep life simple.

What apps are you using with it?
I use Procreate almost exclusively. The team is so obviously dedicated and is responsive and engaged with the users, which is a huge factor. But the app itself is perfect: robust, elegant and simple. They just keep making it better! Dropbox is also on my iPad, which is really useful for shifting files around.

Are there any things you would particularly like to see in updates, or standout features you already love?
I really feel that the promise of the original iPad as a tool for artists is now being fully realised with the Pro and Pencil pairing, along with the amazing job being done by the Procreate team. These three elements together make a very winning, very portable combination that easily produces industry-standard output, and I'm very pleased with the purchases!

Dave is a Stockholm-based illustrator and designer, as well as a partner and senior designer at The Iconfactory.

www.pixelhuset.se

Painting by Dave Brasgalla

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

GAME ART

Break into game art with bespoke courses and industry pro workshops!

Featuring...

Fall into Falllout
Follow Zezhou Chen's art process as he gets out into the wasteland of Fallout 4 to paint a believable female hero.

Summoner's Rift
Veteran conceptual designer Trent Kaniuga offers tips for the best ways to tell a story with visual cues.

Indie publishing
Find out about the independent publishers putting the creatives first and sharing the wealth equally.
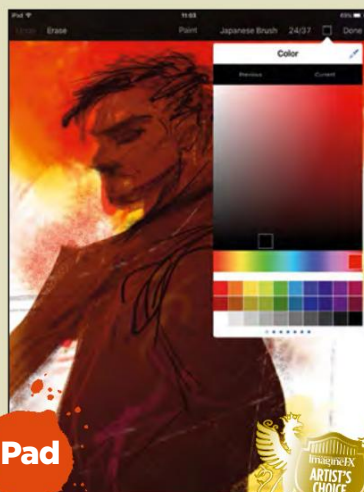
3D for fun!
Games lead artist Paul Canavan explores ways to snap out of creative block, with an open mind and 3D.

ISSUE 133 UK ON SALE *FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY*

Painting is very responsive and it's easy to use, even when you're just painting with your finger!

iPad

ImagineFX ARTIST'S CHOICE

Pixelmator 2.2

BRUSHING UP A powerful photo editing app that paints well, too

Price £3.99
Company Pixelmator Team
Web www.pixelmator.com
RATING 🖌🖌🖌🖌🖌

Pixelmator 2.2 is quite frankly a joy to use. It's marketed as a powerful photo-editing tool for mobile apps, which it absolutely succeeds in (it includes level and curves adjustments, colour corrections, blurs, cloning, filters and suchlike). But Pixelmator is also a fantastic painting app.

It's a triumph in user interface design. Anyone who's ever used an iPad will intuitively know where everything is and how to use it. The sign of a great mobile painting app is not how satisfying it is with something fancy like the Apple Pencil (which is fully supported, alongside the iPad Pro by the way), but how well it works with just your finger. And Pixelmator delivers wonderfully. The pressure sensitivity is great and there's no noticeable lag. Brushes are gathered up into collections, each one represented by an accurate thumbnail, so despite there being over 100 of them to choose from, it never feels excessive.

Pixelmator enables you to import, edit and export Photoshop files, so you can work on your iPhone or iPad and switch back to your Mac or PC whenever you're ready. At only £3.99 this is an absolute bargain for your iPad.

Paintstorm Studio 1.5

MICRO-MANAGER A dream for artists who want to customise brushes, but are there too many options?

MAC & PC

Price £19   **Company** Paintstorm Studio   **Web** www.paintstormstudio.com

Paintstorm's key selling point is the huge amount of control it gives you over its brushes. There are so many, that upon launching the program for the first time your screen will be overwhelmed with panels of options, obscuring the majority of your canvas! Fortunately the panels are customisable, so you can scale down the interface and make them less opaque, and more tolerable.

Once you've got the UI under control, you'll find the surfeit of customisable options available to you in Paintstorm is a blessing and a curse. It's an unusual experience to have to organise a workspace in a painting program before you can start painting. It also feels odd that despite the appearance of the tabs, you can't nest them behind each other as you would in Photoshop. The lack of intuitive controls is problematic when you're offered as many options as you are here. The absence of tool tips is another small frustration.

On the other side of the coin, the ways you can customise your brushes is staggering. Paintstorm gives you

This screenshot doesn't scratch the surface of the number of customisable options at your disposal.

considerably more options to alter your brush behaviours than Photoshop, and often a category will have numerous subcategories within it, which you can also edit, giving you complete control over the brush engine. With this in mind, we strongly recommend that you view the tutorials from within the program, so that you can make the most of the plethora of tools available.

If you're the kind of artist who loves tinkering with custom brushes to see what fun results you can achieve, then Paintstorm is definitely worth trying out. However, if you prefer opening a program and just start painting, this one probably isn't for you.

DETAILS

Features
- Customisable brushes
- Stroke correction
- Customisable dynamic interface
- Close Gaps function ideal for flat colouring
- Customisable panels
- Brushes can bind to perspective
- Seamless brush blending
- Intuitive hotkey assignment

System Requirements
PC: Windows Vista, 7 or later, Core i3 CPU, 2GB RAM, 100MB hard drive space, nVidia GeForce 8800/ Radeon x1900 or higher
Mac: OS 10.7 or higher, Core i3-4150, 2GB RAM, 100MB hard drive space, nVidia GeForce 8800/ Radeon x1900 or higher

Rating
🖌🖌🖌🖌
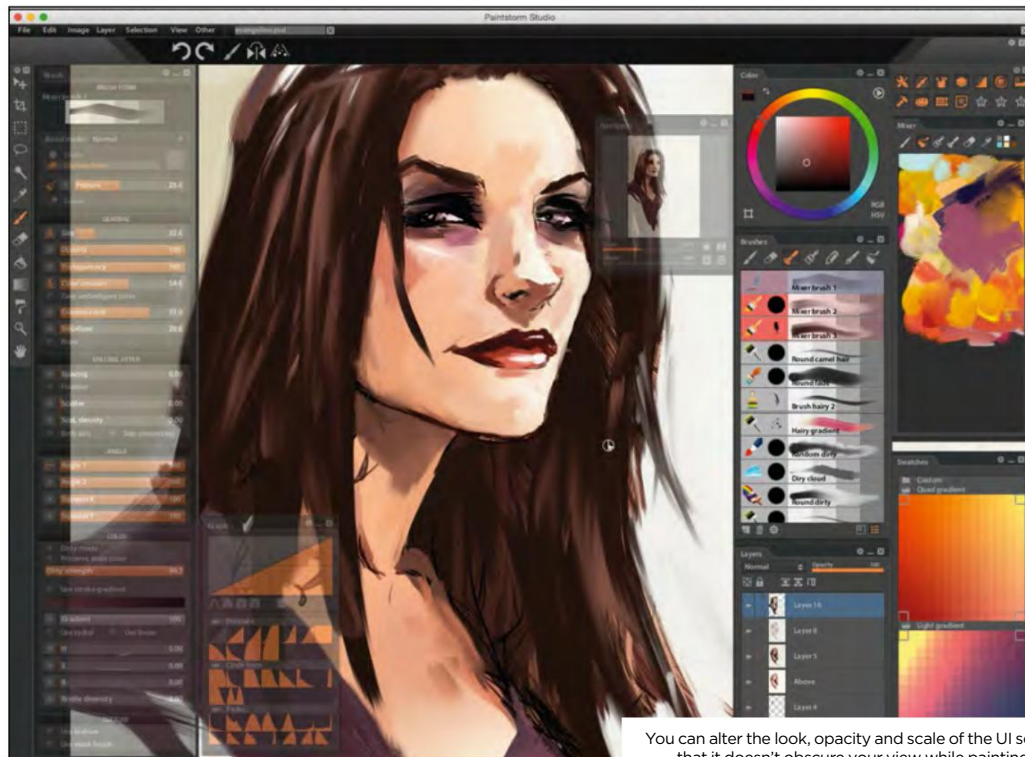
You can alter the look, opacity and scale of the UI so that it doesn't obscure your view while painting.
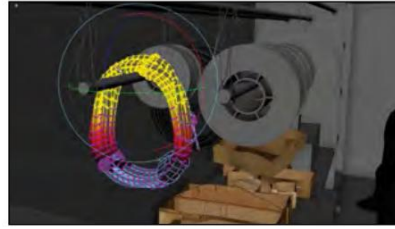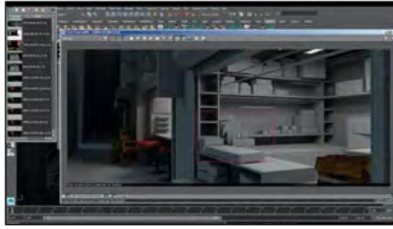
Compositing in Photoshop gives Devon the chance to finesse his image, ensuring that every glorious detail is on show.

In Creating a Sci-Fi Alleyway, Devon Fay constructs a CG masterwork inspired by Syd Mead and Star Wars.

Creating a Sci-Fi Alleyway

SCENE IS BELIEVING Environment artist Devon Fay shows what it takes to craft a realistic city scene inspired by Blade Runner and Star Wars

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop   **Price** $59   **Format** Download   **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

You could believe you were standing in a dingy Tokyo alleyway, if it weren't for the repair droid and the hologram on its workbench. Inspired by the cityscapes of Blade Runner and the grungy aesthetic of classic Star Wars, Devon Fay's masterful scene took him months to complete; in this lengthy video, he explains in detail how he pulled it off (with the help of some friends here and there).

The first half could practically be a workshop in itself, as Devon assembles his reference and ideas, blocks out his scene and crafts the 3D models. Although his software of choice is Maya, you could apply his principles to any standard CG modelling toolset. If you're starting out with 3D software and are intimidated by the idea of creating a richly detailed model, Devon helps you move past that fear, with a tried-and-tested system for building up complexity from the most basic of 3D forms.

The subsequent section on textures disappears down the rabbit hole of 3D software settings, with an exhaustive overview of creating different types of surface. You'll need the specific software Devon uses – Maya, V-Ray and Quixel Suite – to get the most of this section; but the way he chooses how much time to invest in a texture based on the hierarchy of the scene, for example, could save you hours of work.

The final hour revisits the entire process to date before Devon composites his render passes in Photoshop. It's a topic that's been covered in many training videos, but this is as good an explanation as you'll find. Devon helps you understand how to combine common render passes for the most realistic results, then suggests various tricks for applying telling detail.

Across nearly seven hours, Devon delivers a relaxed, authoritative narrative that proves he's as good a teacher as he is an artist. As such, his training video comes highly recommended. ●

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Gathering reference
- Blocking out scenes
- Composition
- Prop creation
- Set dressing
- Realistic textures
- Lighting setup
- Render passes
- Compositing in Photoshop

Length
406 minutes

Rating

ARTIST PROFILE
DEVON FAY

After graduating from the Gnomon School of VFX, Devon started his career in Blizzard Entertainment's film department. He began on matte painted environments for StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty and World of Warcraft: Cataclysm, and was a matte painting lead for Diablo III, World of Warcraft: Mists of Pandaria and StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm. Devon is now a senior environment artist at Infinity Ward, working on Call of Duty: Ghosts and Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare. He has also returned to the Gnomon School as an online instructor.

www.dev-xyz.com

Coverama: Alternative Worlds

WORLDS APART Cover king Marc Simonetti's collection of stunning and varied art gets the large format showcase that it deserves

Author Marc Simonetti **Publisher** Milady **Price** £27 **Web** www.milady.fr **Available** Now

Fans of the sort of art that adorns Terry Pratchett jackets will love Marc Simonetti, a French painter and concept artist who's illustrated a range of notable fantasy and sci-fi books. And even if you aren't sure, this incredible collection could very well convert you.

As you leaf through this crowd-funded hardback, you'll discover covers for books you'll want to own, concept art for video games you'll want to play, and sketches that will send your head spinning in multiple inspirational directions.

It all kicks off with some thrillingly panoramic interpretations of George RR Martin's Song of Fire and Ice. You'll be knocked sideways by Marc's unique (if unfinished) vision of The Iron Throne, which takes the idea of epic to a whole new level, as well as his passionate defence of why he feels this to be the definitive version.

This sets the tone nicely for the rest of the 258, large-format pages, most of which are dominated by single, framed images, giving the art free rein to capture our imaginations.

We're taken on a journey through the Discworld universe, where Marc's in-your-face illustrations capture the innate ridiculousness of Terry Pratchett's imaginings. Then it's on to the horror and madness of HP Lovecraft, conveyed through grimly evocative scenes of darkness and desperation. The ensuing chapters explore, first, a series of legendary worlds, then a collection of brain-tingling futurescapes.

Along with way, you'll find both published and unused work; clever parodies such as an apocalyptic Gone with the Wind poster and a Middle-Earth version of the Abbey Road album art; along with occasional forays into other genres such as hard sci-fi and 20th century war. But generally this is a book of noble warriors, magical creatures and misty landscapes, all

Marc Simonetti brings to life a motley collection of characters from Terry Pratchett's Discworld books.

executed brilliantly by one of the most accomplished names in the business.

The bulk of the book is taken up by art, each chapter introduced by only the briefest of paragraphs. But over the last 24 pages, Marc shares more of his vision and process, in an original and unusual way: reprinting his discussions with clients over how to interpret their work visually. These idea-generating back-and-forths with authors Sam Sykes, Emmaneul Chastelliere and Terry Prachett – accompanied by work-in-progress sketches – adds a surprisingly honest and fascinating dimension to a masterful collection.

One of many book covers that Marc worked on – this is 2011's The Gilded Rune, published by Wizards of the Coast.

RATING ✎✎✎✎✎

Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel

COMIC LEGEND Will Eisner elevated cartoons from throwaway fare to high literary artform. This coffee-table book shows you why...

Author Paul Levitz **Publisher** Abrams ComicArts **Price** £25 **Web** www.abramscomicarts.com **Available** Now

Every artist with an interest in graphic novels needs to know about New York artist Will Eisner. His seminal 1978 work A Contract With God is widely considered the first significant graphic novel, ushering in a new kind of personal, non-superhero storytelling that changed the art of comics forever.

Featuring over 200 colour illustrations, and making full use of its large page format, this hardback volume is as complete a collection of

A detail from Will Eiser's cover for A Contract With God, his 1985 comic on the human condition.

Will's work as you're ever likely see, stretching from his 1930s newspaper cartoons and iconic 1940s strip The Spirit, right up to his work for Dark Horse Comics, just before his death in 2005 at the age of 86.

Paul Levitz, historian and former president and publisher of DC Comics, traces Will's evolution as an artist with a clear sense of passion, drawing you into the detail of the artist's life. But what really keeps you turning the pages, is the art itself.

The teeming life of an immigrant city burned into the young Will's eyes on his arrival in New York, and the earthy immediacy and visceral nature of his street scenes still have the capacity to enthral and amaze today. As Brad Metzer argues: "It wasn't that he was one of the first to create 'serious comics'. It's that he was one of the first to show the world that comics should be taken seriously."

RATING

Heaven's Hell: the Art of Anthony Jones

CHARACTER CREATION Now this is what we call deviant art... discover the twisted afterlife world of a master artist

Editor Anthony Jones **Publisher** Design Studio Press **Price** $25 **Web** www.designstudiopress.com **Available** Now

Backers of this Kickstarter project may just have expected a nice collection of their favourite artist's work: but they've got much more than that. In this deliciously deviant volume, concept artist, illustrator and educator Anthony Jones unleashes his "demented visions of the afterlife" in a stunning series of mainly monochrome paintings.

Not quite telling a story, Heaven's Hell nonetheless introduces a string of horrifying and melancholy characters

One of the stern-looking Sisters of Halilea, who Anthony Jones reveals as someone who finds pleasure in the demise of love.

that get right under your skin. Inspired by "extreme high concept fashion design, black-and-white photography and monsters", they're quite unlike anything we've seen before. And by giving them full space to breathe, it thrillingly conveys how much emotional power can be elicited by an artist willing to go with their gut instinct.

With the lion's share of the first 77 pages handed to the art itself (while

tossing out pithy backstories for each demonic personality), the remainder of this 130-page softback devotes itself to tutorials. These aren't full walkthroughs, but they do offer a series of valuable insights into the Photoshop techniques Anthony used to create and finesse his provocative and unsettling creatures, right down to individual brush presets.

RATING

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
PRESENTS

FANTASY
illustrator
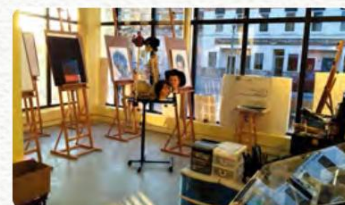
This issue:

100 FXPosé Traditional
The best traditional art revealed.

104 Creative Space
We visit the Cris Delara Studio.

106 Paint art on location
James Gurney heads outdoors.

114 First Impressions
Rodney Matthews talks music.

HOW TO PERFECT...
COLOUR THUMBNAILING

Anand Radhakrishnan demonstrates how to fix an effective colour scheme **Page 112**

FANTASY
illustrator

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Sam Flegal

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.samflegal.com
EMAIL: sam@samflegal.com
MEDIA: Oil on hardboard

Sam's biggest influences lie in the art that he grew up with, from playing games and reading comics: created by Brom, Frank Frazetta and Todd McFarlane.

"Early on I worked digitally," he says, "but once I delved into traditional oil painting, I knew I'd found my home. The quality of my work took a big jump."

When he's doing his own thing, his favourite subject is Norse Lore. "By painting the myths of northern Europe, I connect to something older and greater than myself. There are so many great stories that I'm sure I'll paint the gods and goddesses for the rest of my life."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"My knowledge of the Norse gods is limited to what I've seen in the Marvel films. Seeing Sam's engaging depictions of the Nordic immortals makes me want to find out more about this mythical world."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 FRIGG, LADY OF SECRETS
Oil, 18x30in

"Queen Frigg is the greatest of all seers. She knows more than her husband but tells none. This painting was for a pagan temple in Newark, England. It was great working on a religious painting, but it was also intense. It's daunting to know that you're painting something used in worship."

2 ODIN'S SECRETS
Oil, 18x24in

"The head of Mimir, dead god of knowledge, whispers secrets to Odin, while his two ravens tell him what has happened each day in Midgard. This is my most shared painting online. I find it fitting that Odin, the Grey Wanderer, also likes to wander the internet."

🇨🇦 Michelle Papadopoulos

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.michellepapadopoulos.com
EMAIL: artofmichellep@gmail.com
MEDIA: Graphite, ink, watercolour on paper

Having worked as an artist in the gaming industry for over 10 years, Michelle became interested in illustration four years ago. "I went through a seven-year gap where I didn't draw or paint very much, so I started to relearn the basics," she says.

Finding inspiration in fairy tales, myths, fantasy films and nature, there are many artists who have influenced her style, including Mucha, Arthur Rackham, Klimt, Waterhouse and contemporaries such as Iain McCaig, Charles Vess and Rebecca Guay.

"I love line art with washes a lot, but I also like more rendered paintings," she says. "I want to find a balance between the two. I'm still trying to figure out my 'artistic voice', but I have a much clearer understanding of what I want to do than I did a few years ago."

1 MAIDEN TREE
Graphite, ink, watercolour on paper, 8.5x11.5in
"This was created for an anthology of re-told fairy tales called Once Upon a Time. I illustrated a story called Maiden Tree and this is the moment the maiden transforms from her cursed tree form back into a woman, which can only happen in the moonlight. I purposely went for more toned-down palette than usual. It's one of my favourites."

2 NOT ALONE
Ink, watercolour on paper, 8.5x11.5in
"I got to indulge my love of gnarled trees in this piece. The girl in this painting may think she's alone with her troubles, but little does she know there are others who want to help."

3 KEEP AN EYE OUT
Ink, watercolour on paper, 11x17in
"This painting is about finding inspiration and being wary of creative block or other obstacles that can get in the way."

4 BELOW THE SURFACE
Ink, watercolour on paper, 11x17in
"In this painting the girl is imagining herself as a mermaid, which is why their colouring is the same. I used to imagine myself as a mermaid all the time when I was younger."
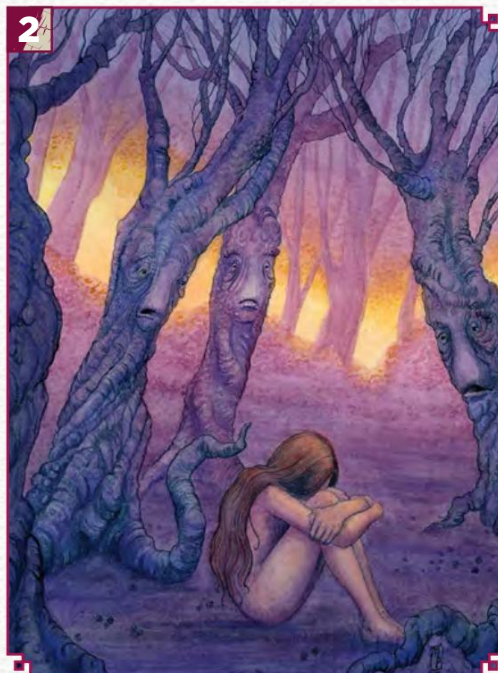
Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

Email: fxpose@imaginefx.com
(maximum 1MB per image)

Post: (CD or DVD):
FXPosé
ImagineFX
Quay House
The Ambury
Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

Creative Space

HEY YOU!
Are you a part of a regular art class or group? Email us at mail@imaginefx.com if you want to feature here!

CRIS DELARA STUDIO

Renowned pin-up artist CRIS DELARA has opened up her own studio to help nurture local geek culture and fan artists

For years, Cris Delara had the idea of running events from her home-based office in Welland, Ontario, Canada, before making it a reality. "We needed to be a business, not one based from home, to show off our art and job skills as an attraction," she says, "and also to engage people in our events. Being an art studio and art school was the logical solution – and we did it!"

The studio teaches drawing and painting classes in both traditional and digital media, and plans to hold sculpture sessions. Alongside these classes, Cris runs events with the co-owner and manager, Alex Stockler. Together they aim to promote fandom culture, striving to create events that combine Cris' love of pin-ups with comics, manga and anime, games, films, cosplay and, of course, art. "Our events are important because there are no events like the ones we've planned. There are comic conventions in the region, but our goal is focused on the artistic aspect of fan art," she says.

Cris' school, which is the source of both classes and events, aims to nurture passionate artists and create a group that's interested in fine art who will be constantly leaning, evolving and improving their artistic skills alongside her. In time, she hopes that this will become the basis for a thriving community of artists in her region.

The studio (pictured above) has plans to hold proper life-drawing lessons, rather than have students draw from props or photo references.

The school is still growing, and Cris hopes to attract more local interest and regular attendees. She plans to keep the events free to all, with the aim that word of mouth will highlight what classes are on offer at the school: "We hope to build up a good reputation that will attract more students, more customers and business!" Indeed, her studio has plans to put together an art exhibition featuring students' projects, as well as offer one-off life drawing classes and portrait sessions.

Cris is the owner and artist at Cris Delara Studio, where she teaches her craft. She specialises in pin-up art and created issue 123's pin-up cover image. See more at her website, www.crisdelarastudio.blogspot.co.uk.

Creative Space Cris Delara Studio

The studio has plans to offer life-drawing classes and live portrait sessions in 2016.

Cris says that her studio aims to promote geek culture fan art in her region.

Chris teaches traditional and digital techniques, including black and white portraiture.

Aside from drawing superheroes, Cris also holds board game sessions in the hope of building a community of geek culture-loving artists.

Casein
PAINT ART ON LOCATION

JAMES GURNEY heads outdoors and uses casein paint to create a giant robot trampling through a suburban setting…

Could it be possible to plan and execute a science fiction painting entirely outside, removed from the comfort of the studio? I have the chance to find out, because a big construction project has moved into my hometown.

Track excavators have always looked like robots to me, so I start with the idea of designing a 40-foot-tall mech based on the engineering principles of heavy construction equipment. My plan is to work outdoors for every step of the process, from thumbnail sketches, to comps, to the finished painting. The question is: will reality ignite my imagination or overwhelm it?

The concept for the picture doesn't come easy at first. They say a creative success is the end product of a thousand failures. But my ideas don't seem like failures when I first hatch them. Each one starts with a burst of enthusiasm. It takes a while for disenchantment to set in. I keep playfully experimenting until I arrive at the idea of showing the robot tangled up in a complex accident scene.

I set up my easel alongside a busy franchise thoroughfare. Along the way I meet policemen, machine operators and college students, each of whom looks at my work-in-progress and gives me helpful feedback.

James animates stop-motion puppets, produces video, writes books, paints dinosaurs and is more mild-mannered than the predator named after him: Torvosaurus gurneyi. For more, visit www.jamesgurney.com. �

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

AUG 2015

OBSOLETE ROBOT PARKED OUT BACK   MIDNIGHT AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

1 Explore concepts and compositions

I sketch thumbnails in watercolour, and get ideas for scale, setting, time of day and pose.
Some are at night, some are at midday, and others in overcast light. I want to avoid a lot of the familiar
battle clichés, and imagine scenarios where robots are commonplace.
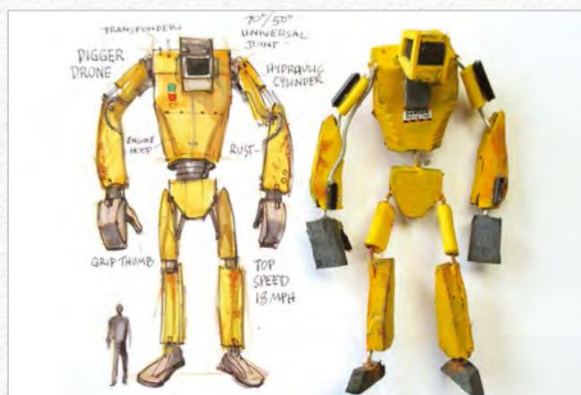
2 Build a foam maquette

I sketch a standing robot, then scale the maquette to
match the drawing. The maquette is made out of sheets of
construction foam. I cut out pieces and sandwich them with
hot glue over a wire skeleton. The wire skeleton makes
complicated mechanical joints unnecessary.

3 Maquette generates pose ideas

My first idea is to show the robot seated, forgotten
and rusting in the back of a repair shop. The maquette
helps with poses and lighting. But I reject the idea because
it's too static. The robot needs to be doing something
active if he's going to have any personality.

4 Robot meets humans

In this little casein comprehensive, I get the robot up
on his feet and show him encountering humans. Perhaps he
was built on a secret manufacturing base by other
autonomous, intelligent robots and he's exploring the
human world for the first time. I like the basic composition
and the sense of scale, but it lacks a sense of drama. Time
to return to the drawing board.

5 Brainstorm in a restaurant

At my favourite diner I sketch more ideas while I wait
for my scrambled eggs to be delivered to my table. I'm
inspired by a photo I saw of the consequences of a
chemical explosion in China. Why not show some sort of
accident scene that the robot gets involved in?

THE AFTERMATH —

LIGHTING TIP

CONSISTENCY IS EVERYTHING
Choose a viewing angle so that the light comes from a consistent direction for each element.
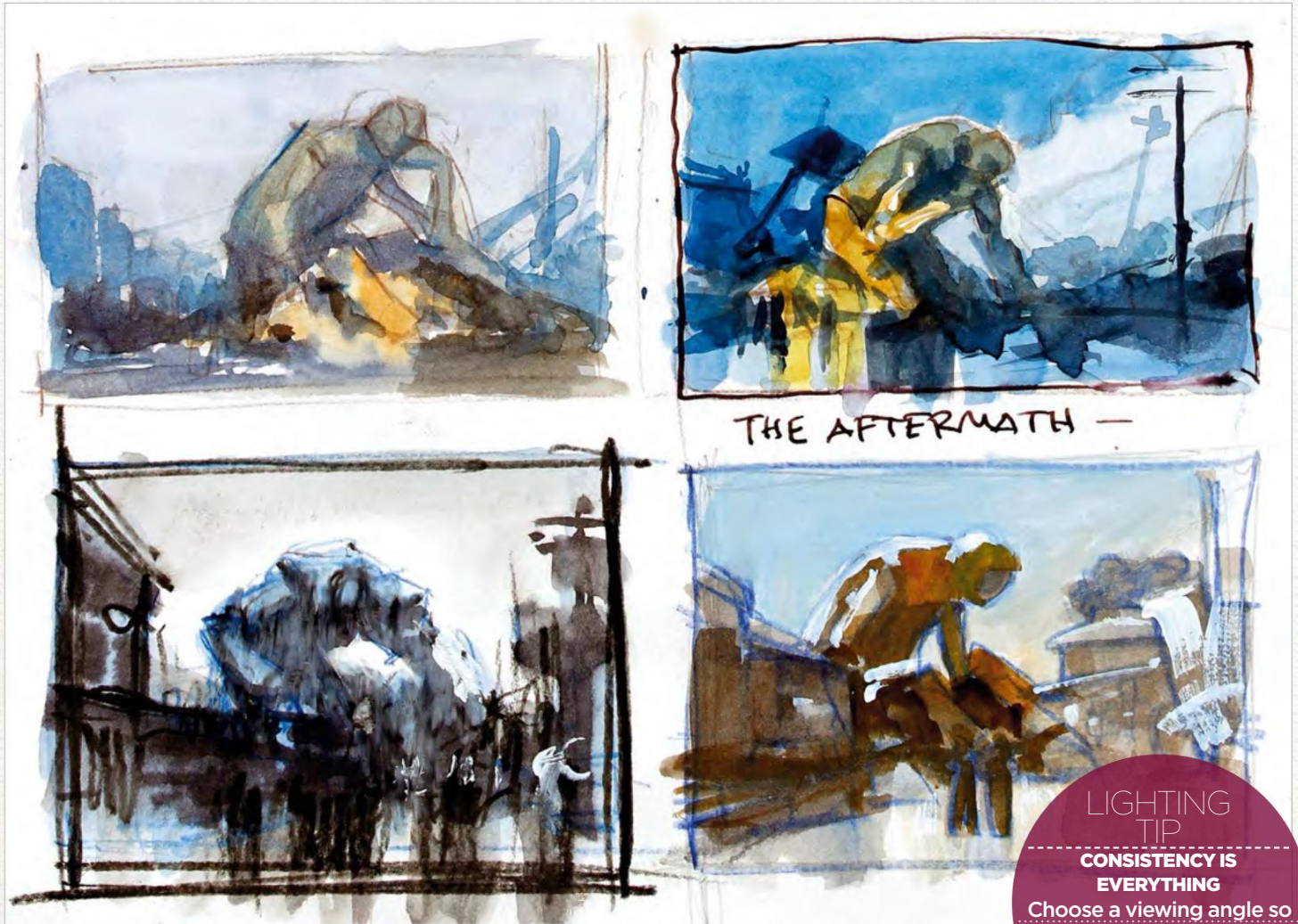
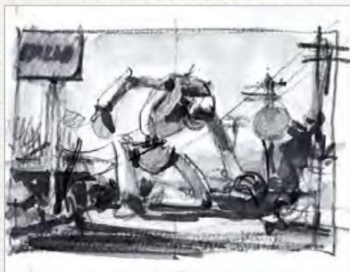### 6 *Focus on the aftermath*

Now I've got something. The robot feels remorseful. He's just trying to help, but he's making it worse. There's debris from an accident he didn't mean to cause. There are firemen and police and passersby at the scene.

ARTIST INSIGHT

TALK TO LOCALS
When you're outdoors, allow yourself to see your painting through the eyes of people who pass by, especially experts. You're thinking about colour, edges and perspective, but they look at the subject very differently.

7 *Interact with the environment*

More thumbnails help me figure out how the robot should interact with the cars, power lines and people in the scene. I also think about time of day and light direction. Interactivity weaves the action with the setting, implies cause and effect, and gets away from the dull green-screen look of so many special effects-driven movies. ➥

8 *Give the maquette a hero pose*
I put the maquette in a pose where he's down on one knee. Instead of looking despairing or tired, he looks more active and dynamic, like he's bending down to try to help someone. The maquette gives me the information I need for lighting.

9 *Work out the whole scene*
With the light coming from the left and behind, I do a quick sketch to generate ideas for the arrangement of all the elements in the shot. There should be plenty of cars, utility poles and fast food outlets lining the outer edges of the composition to suggest action going on outside the frame.
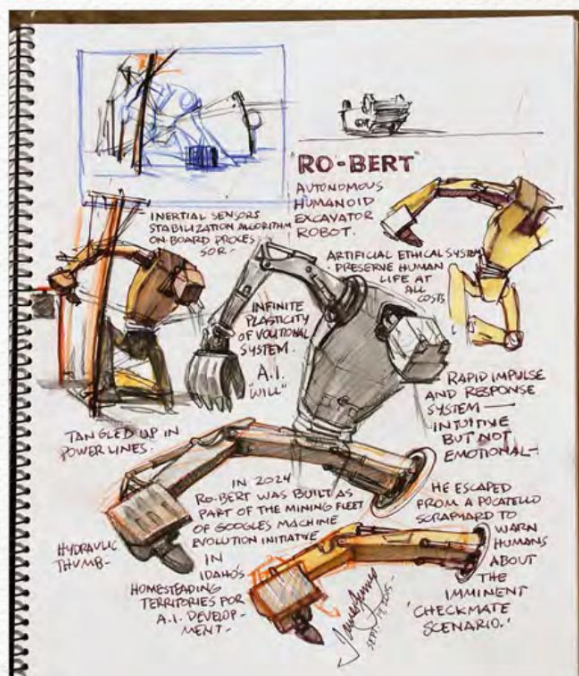
10 *Study an excavator*
To understand the joints and hydraulics, I do a careful gouache study of a track excavator. I talk to the operators, who explain how the hydraulics and the controls work. The arm is made up of two parts, the boom and the stick, ending in the linkage, the bucket and the ground engagement tools.

11 *Work out the backstory*
I think more about a science-fiction backstory. This is an autonomous robot that escaped from an AI research compound to warn humans about the upcoming Checkmate Scenario. A whole novel-length story unfolds in my head. It won't all be reflected in this one painting, but I could build the story backward or forward if I needed to.
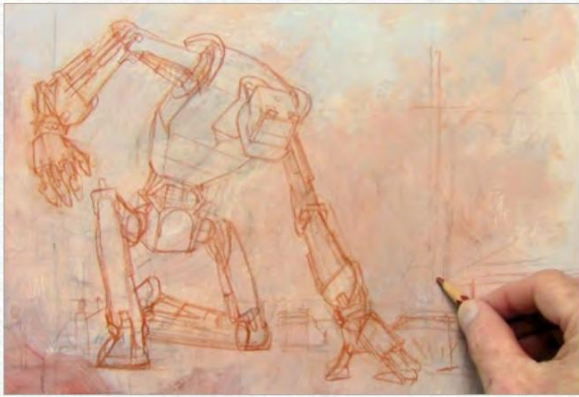
12 Plan with a line drawing

On a 12x16-inch illustration board, primed with tinted gesso, I develop the design with a reddish watercolour pencil. Note the five-fingered hand, which I soon realise is too sophisticated for this character. Better to limit his dexterity and make him more helpless in the situation.

13 Try again on the hand

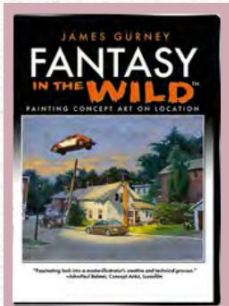I paint over the five-fingered hand and make this attempt at a more primitive hand. But it still doesn't work. It looks too much like a fist. So I paint it again and replace it with a bucket-like hand. I have to redraw or repaint many elements in the scene four or five times.

JAMES GURNEY
FANTASY IN THE WILD
PAINTING CONCEPT ART ON LOCATION
ImagineFX

WATCH JAMES!
FANTASY IN THE WILD
■ This workshop is based on James' latest video, Fantasy in the Wild: Painting Concept Art on Location, which can be purchased at his website.

14 Get advice from a policeman

While I'm at the police station, painting one of the cars, several officers approach me, look at my painting and give me some helpful pointers about how they would deal with the situation I'm painting. "The first thing you're looking for is injuries... the safety of the people and the public," one of them tells me. "Once you figure that out, then you slowly start dissecting it from there."

EASEL TIP
SPEED AND ACCURACY
Set up the easel so that the painting is close to the line of sight and the paint mixing area is just below the painting.

Pencil   Acrylics

COLOUR THUMBNAILING

Illustrator ANAND RADHAKRISHNAN demonstrates how to fix an effective colour scheme during the planning stages of your painting

Very few artists begin work directly on canvas without any prior preparation. Thumbnailing for value and colour is one of the most important stages in the painting process and is widely practised among artists. It helps to have a clearer idea of the image and can save a lot of time while working on commissioned assignments.

The process of thumbnailing involves breaking down of the image into shapes and then dealing with the principles of design with respect to the light and dark portions of the design. Working in colour

MATERIALS
- Sketchbook
- Acrylic (or any water-based opaque medium)
- Ink, marker or Sharpie for thumbnails
- Pencils (2B or 4B)
- Brushes

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

could be looked at as an extension of working in value. An image can work and be effective to a certain limit, as long as the values are in place and the design works at the thumbnail level.

The colours would, at this stage, add to the design by giving it a sense of mood and timing. Colour should always be looked at in relation to value, because every colour has a value and it can be very helpful if the eye is trained to look at colours in terms of the greyscale.

I approach colour by thinking of the colour wheel and how various colours appear in relation to one another.

I usually make between four and 10 very quick colour thumbnails, about three inches in height to understand the different colour combinations. Then I choose either the best one or a combination of two for the painting.

Anand is a freelance illustrator who works in Mumbai, India. He graduated with a BFA from Sir JJ Institute of Applied Art in 2011 and followed it up with a couple of years of learning illustration at The Art Department. He derives inspiration from masters like Moebius, Alphonse Mucha and Jeffrey Jones. www.anandrk.tumblr.com.

1 Idea and graphite sketch
This is a sketch for a scene from the science-fiction book, Ender's Game. In the scene, Ender is having a telepathic conversation with the queen bugger – an insectoid alien invader. I've taken quite a few liberties to keep the detail simple. I usually start off very loose, trying to find the right pose and composition. Graphite works best at this stage for me.

ARTIST INSIGHT
COLOUR THAT'S WITHIN COLOUR
Objects in nature very rarely have single flat colours. The colour of an object is affected by various factors, such as time of day, temperature of light, its surrounding objects, and the material and transparency of that object. It helps to be mindful of this while painting. When in doubt, squint!

Notan thumb: a pure black and white thumbnail to play and fix the design using shapes.

2 Value thumbnails
While planning for a painting, take colour out of the equation and solve composition and value problems on a black and white level. The idea is to create pleasing light and dark shapes, and then fill in the corresponding colours in those shapes. Here I want a cool light against his black hair to create a focal point and hence a lot of my design decisions are made from that.

Three-tone thumb: 50 per cent grey is added to the black and white.

Value study: a more involved rough, but still simplified.

Complementary

These are pairs of colours on opposite sides of the colour wheel. When placed together they have the highest contrast and attract the viewer's eye.

split-Complementary

This uses colours on the opposite sides of the wheel, but instead of one colour, you use the two on either side of it. This is a personal favourite of mine.

Analogous

Any three neighbouring colours on the wheel. This makes for harmonious and fluid pictures and are great to create an ethereal and dreamy quality.
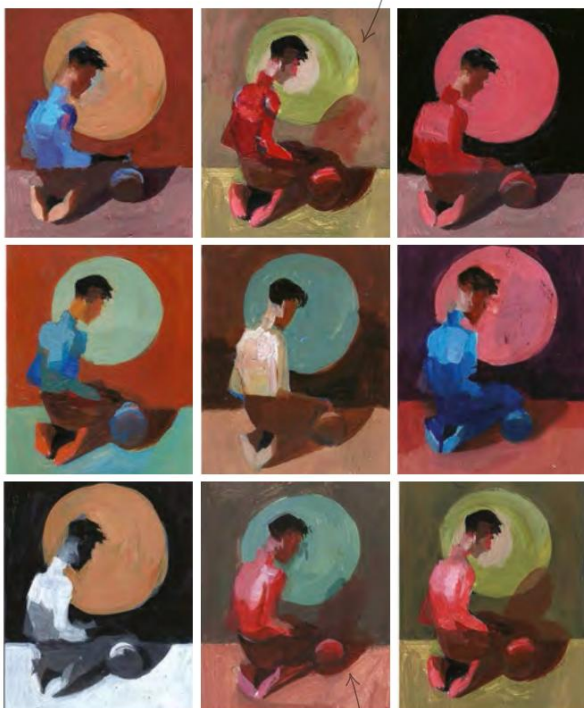
Triadic

Three colours that are equidistant to each other. They can stand apart from each other in an image while retaining harmony.

3 Colour wheel and colour schemes

The colour wheel can be simplified to warm colours and cool colours. Combinations of these colours can be used effectively by applying colour schemes and studying the colour wheel in depth. I've highlighted four basic schemes here, each of which can help convey a different mood and effect.

Here I've diverted from my value design because I want to make the silhouette of the character clearer.

I like this one the most. A quick survey carried out among my friends helps me to decide.

A happy accident was that the circular shape of the queen can also read as a planet, so it works in the context of the story.

The line where shadow and light meet called the terminator is where the image is most saturated. This can be exaggerated to add interest.

I paint the soles of his shoes blue to balance out the blue elsewhere and to help the viewer navigate through the painting.

4 Colour thumbnails

I create thumbnails for the Ender's Game piece, based on these colour schemes. Each of these follows the values that I fixed earlier in step two. It helps to set one colour as the dominant one and then support it with the other colours in the scheme, depending on where your focal point is.
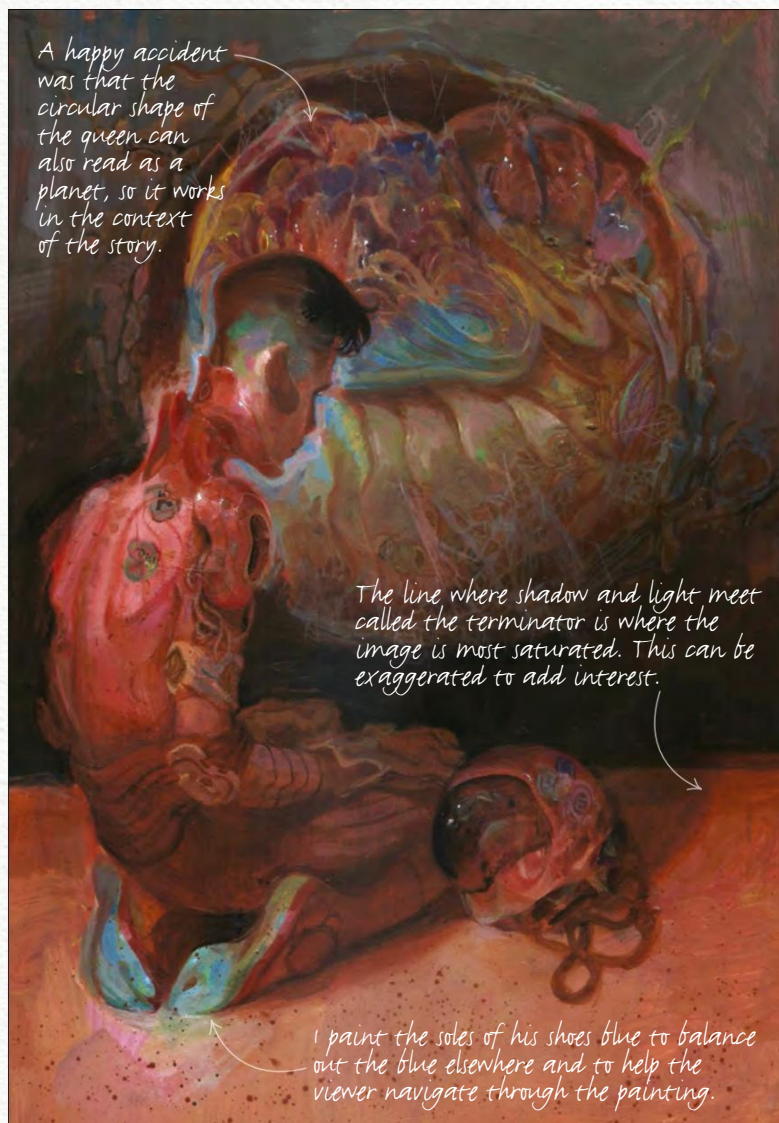
5 Colour study before starting the piece

A more refined colour study helps iron out the kinks in your final design. I usually improvise at this stage and at the final stage, just to keep the painting process more engaging. Here you can see that I am using a split-complementary colour scheme with Red-Green-Blue with muted greys to support it. Reds are dominating the picture with accents of blue at the point of highest contrast.

First Impressions

Rodney Matthews

The English fantasy illustrator on his sharp art, and recording concept albums

How did you catch the fantasy art bug?
It was my dad's fault. He passed on his artistic, musical genes to me – I had no choice! The fantasy inclination developed in the swinging sixties.

Did your upbringing influence your distinctive 'spiky' painting style?
My early years were spent wandering around the garden observing flora and fauna; watching insects, birds and small furry critters. I had such passion for flowers that at age three, I went into our neighbour's garden and picked all the tops off Mrs Rogers' prized tulips! I also noticed that many life forms were endowed with self-defence systems or mechanisms that included spikes and thorns. Picking Mrs Rogers' roses was a hazardous undertaking. In short, I portray nature in my art as it appears to me: beautiful, yet dangerous.

Did anyone help or hinder your career?
I don't want to dwell on the hinderers, but on the positive side there have been many who have furthered my career, by encouragement and practical commitment. First up would be my dad

THE HEAVY METAL HERO
"This one will be included on my album. I already have the recording finished."

as I have already mentioned, and later the painter Anthony Rossiter, my tutor at The West of England College of Art. Then there was Peter Ledeboer, the proprietor of the Big O poster company in the 1970s, who took me on and marketed tons of my posters. Michael Moorcock, who recommended me to his publishers, and later we did several projects together. Gerry Anderson was another highly talented man who took to my work and became a good friend.

How has your art style evolved?
Working in an advertising agency as an illustrator from 1962 to 1970, I was

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required to work in many different styles. I've retained some of these to this day; however, the most enduring is the 'spiky' fantasy style mentioned earlier.

How would you describe your working relationship with fantasy and sci-fi author Michael Moorcock?
I've not worked directly with Michael for many years, but have very fond memories of doing so in the 1970s. Michael seemed to be on a similar artistic wavelength to myself, in that he made very few alterations to the designs that I presented, and was most complimentary.

What's been the highlight of your career to date? Any low points?
If I had to single out a highlight, it would most likely be working with the late, great Gerry Anderson on my (long in the gestation) idea for children's TV: Lavender Castle. Among the low points would be the way in which the owners and copyright-holders of this show messed up, resulting in its demise.

What advice would you give your younger self?
Why not get a proper job?!

What's your most recent project or exhibition?
I'm still knocking out a few album covers, such as last year: ones for Praying Mantis, Nazareth and Magnum. I'm also holding an exhibition, 'Ionawr', at The Bishop's Palace, Wells, England, endorsed recently by John Cleese, one of my heroes, who also happens to be a collector of my work.

In addition to my art, I'm also a keen drummer. At the end of 2015 I released the track I Saw Three Ships on CD, accompanied by a Christmas card featuring my artwork. You could say that it's a taster of the album I'm working on, where each tune is influenced by 12 of my images. I'm fortunate to be working alongside Jeff Scheetz on guitar, John Payne of Asia on bass, former Yes keyboard player Oliver Wakeman and multi-instrumentalist Pete Coleman … more names to follow.
Rodney worked in an advertising agency before turning freelance in 1970 and breaking into the fields for which he became famous: sci-fi and fantasy posters, record covers and book covers. www.rodneymatthews.com

LEGACY
"My most recent of the album cover artworks I've done for Praying Mantis."